



THIS BOOK
BELONGS TO
HENRY EDW. HOWSE,
FRENCHAY.

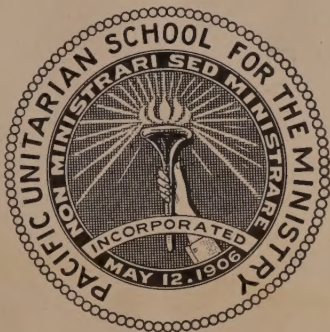
If thou art borrowed by a friend,
Right welcome shall he be
To read, to study, *not to lend*,
But to return to me.

Not that imparted knowledge doth
Diminish learning's store;
But Books, I find, to many lent,
Return to me no more.

Read slowly; pause frequently;
think seriously;
keep cleanly, return duly,
with the corners of the leaves
not turned down.

H. Mc. Lachlan.

1172



BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

BY EXCHANGE WITH

U. H. M. C.

G/g2

THE
CHRISTIAN REFLECTOR,

AND

Theological Inquirer.

—♦♦—

VOL. V.

Keep your Mind always open to receive Truth, and never set limits to your own Improvement. Be always ready to hear what may be objected even against your favorite Opinions, and those which have had longest Possession of your Assent. And if there should be any new and uncontrollable Evidence brought against these old or beloved Sentiments, do not wink your Eyes fast against the Light, but part with any thing for the Sake of Truth. Remember when you overcome an Error you gain Truth; the Victory is on your Side, and the advantage is all your own.

Dr Watts.

Liverpool:

Printed by F. B. Wright, Castle Street.

SOLD IN LONDON, BY C. FOX, & Co., 33, THREADNEEDLE STREET;
DAVID EATON, 187, HIGH HOLBORN; AND MAY BE HAD OF
THE BOOKSELLERS IN GENERAL.

1824.

288,4
C861
v.5

Preface.

IN presenting their Subscribers and Correspondents with the last number of the Fifth Volume of the CHRISTIAN REFLECTOR, the Editors beg to renew their acknowledgments for the increased encouragement their little Work has met with during the past year.

The Editors take this opportunity of informing their Friends, that the next Volume will begin a New Series of the Christian Reflector, and will be printed on a new and handsome Type.

It was in contemplation to have added eight pages more to the Work and to have raised the price to sixpence, in compliance with the wishes of several highly respectable friends ; but on ac-

count of many others, by whom the small difference of price would be felt, that plan has been relinquished, and it will be continued the same size, and at the same price.

Without renewing professions, the Editors leave the past Volumes of their Work as pledges of what may be expected from their future labors ; hoping that in the great work of Christian Reformation they have not labored in vain, and that their future efforts in the same cause will be in some measure successful.

Liverpool, Nov. 27, 1824.

A GENERAL INDEX

Of Names and Subjects.

A

Association, Unitarian, Plan of by Restrictor, 80. Remarks on ditto by Moderator, 108. Remarks on Moderator, by Q. 203.

Alterations in collections of Hymns, Remarks on, 139.

Atonements, Questions on 115. Doctrine of, 183.

B

Barren Fig Tree, Inquiry concerning, 155.

Beauty, remarks on Moral, 179.

Biblical Criticism, on Psalm ii. 7, ex. 1, cxxi. 5, 1. On 2 Sam. i. 18, 25. On 1 Cor. xv. 22, Prov. xx. 26, 49. On the word ANHP, *Aner*, man as applied to Jesus the Christ, 73. On Matt. i. 16, 97. On Rom. ix. 5, 121. On Prov. xix. 23, xx. 22, 169. On Gen. xix. 26, 193. On Isa. ix. 6, 217. On Job xix. 25—29, 241.

Byron, Lord, Remarks on a passage in the Monthly Repository concerning, 162.

C

Caterer.—No. XIV. Pope Gregory's Letter to Phocas, 18. Monk Anthony, 19.

No. XV. The advantages of a classical education to a Theologian, 44. The price of education, 45. Brazen Nose College, *ib.* Savary's Remarks on Despotism, 46.

No. XVI. Jupiter Capitolinus metamorphosed into St. Peter, 91. Connection between Heathen Temples and Orthodox Churches, 92.

No. XVII. David Levi and the Rev. W. Romaine, 116. Hindoo superstition, 117.

No. XVIII. A Mahometan Sermon, 187. Royal Death-bed Scene, 188.

No. XIX. Petition of a Catawba Indian, 258. An enlightened congregation, *ib.*

Clarke, Dr. A. and the Devil Deniers, 8.

——— Commentary, and Mr. Grundy's Remarks, 15.

——— on the Acts of the Apostles, 84.

Christ, on praying to, 4.

- Christian Ministry defended and Priestcraft exploded, 27, 50, 71, 101, 126, 157, 172, 195, 221, 243, 264.
 Character (the Pastoral) of God, 67.
 Contentment, Essay on, 38.
 Conversation among weavers respecting the Devil, &c. 153.
 Correspondents, Notices to, 24, 48, 72, 96, 120, 144, 168, 192, 216, 240, 264, 280.
 Cree, Rev. R.'s Remarks on the Park Lane Dinner, 70.

D

- Dean of Carlisle—Letter to, 53.
 Devil Deniers, Dr. A. Clarke's Remarks on and Reproof of, 8.

F

- Father, the cruel and unnatural, 124.

I

- Intelligence, Religious.—Lancashire & Cheshire U. Missionary Society, 20. Meeting at Wigan, 45. Rev. George Harris's Lectures, *ib.* Rev. W. Stevens's do. 47. Rev. J. Grundy's acceptance of an invitation to Liverpool, 71. Lectures at Hanley, 72. Interruption of Worship at Blackburn, 92. Notice of Anniversary of the Unitarian Congregation Meeting at Moor Lane, Bolton, 94. Opening a Unitarian Church at Pittsburgh U. S. N. America, 118. Second Anniversary of the Unitarian Congregation at Moor Lane, Bolton, 118. Annual Meeting of the Presbyterian Unitarian Ministers, 142. Annual Meeting of the West Riding, Yorkshire, Unitarian Book and Tract Society, *ib.* Hunter Street (Liverpool) Meeting House, *ib.* Notice of opening the Unitarian Meeting House, Todmorden, *ib.* Opening New Chapel at Todmorden, 165. Meeting of Baptist Assembly, 166—Unitarian Fund, *ib.*—Christian Tract Society, 167. Mr. Fox's Speech at ditto, *ib.* Anniversary of Provincial Meeting of Lancashire and Cheshire, 168. Sixth Anniversary of the Liverpool Great Cross Hall Street Unitarian Society, *ib.* Wright's Missionary Life, 189. Provincial Meeting of the Presbyterian Ministers of Lancashire and Cheshire, *ib.* Unitarian Dinner at Manchester, 234. Mr. Potter's speech at ditto, *ib.* Mr. Grundy's, 235, Mr. Robberds's, 236, and Mr. Harris's ditto at ditto, 237. Mr. Grundy's removal to Liverpool, 240. Lectures on Sunday Evenings at Preston by Mr. Cree; Liverpool, by F. B. Wright; Nantwich by Mr. Hawkes, 259. Further particulars respecting the Dinner at Manchester, 259. Instance of Bigotry and Intolerance manifested by some Magistrates in Leicestershire, 261. Anniversary of the Scottish Unitarians at Glasgow, 278. Resignation of Mr.

Maurice at Frenchay, 280. Succeeded by Mr. H. Clarke, the Missionary, *ib.*

L

Language of the Prophets, peculiarity in their speaking in the name of God, and in the person of God., &c. 229, 273.

Lower Classes, on the phrase, &c. 252. Reply to Remarks on, 276.

M

Ministers, on their visiting their people, 56.

Methodists, instance of illiberal conduct among them 71.

O

Orthodoxy, Modern, the perversion of Scripture, 69. Reputed, 65.

Orthodoxiana.—Lines on Dr. Priestley, 90.

P

Philalethes farewell to G. W. V. on the subject of Unitarians not Socinians, 90.

Poetry.—A Christian's examination of himself at the commencement of the New year, 25. Lines on leaving a Friend's House, 47. The Autumn Evening, 48. Hymn from Bowring's Matins and Vespers, 72. An address to the Devil, such as he is supposed to be, 95. An appeal to the Orthodox on the same, 96. On 1 Corinthians, xiii. from Bowring, 119. Hymn for the Children of a Charity School, 143. The pleasures of this Life nothing in comparison with those of another, *ib.* A Fragment found in a Case containing a Human Skeleton, 191. Lines on 1 Sam. xviii. 6, 7, 192. The Perfections of the Deity, 216. To-morrow, 240. God's Majesty and Dominion, 264. The Countryman and the Orthodox Divine, *ib.*

Q

Question, an important "Whom did Jesus of Nazareth worship?" 142. Answered, 150. Query on Daniel, xii. 25, 215. Explanation of the same in answer to, 233.

R

Reflections on Ephes. v. 1, 186.—In a country Church Yard, 284

S

Sunday School Books, remarks on, &c. 114. Inquiry concerning, 148.

T

Theology of Milton's Poem, 33.

Trinitarian Hypotheses, 13.—Additions to the Scriptures, 156.
Trinitarianism incompatible with the Lord's Prayer, 111.

U

Unitarians and Trinitarians, 9.

Unitarians not Socinians, 63.

Unitarian Marriage Bill, 133.—Questions on ditto, 140.

An Index of the Signatures of Correspondents.

A. U. C.....	Page 142	Observer, An.....	Page 153
C. B. B.....	280	One of the Middle Class.....	278
Christian, a Unitarian.....	156	Philalethes.....	9. 90
Clarke, Henry.....	37	Priestcraft, an Enemy to....	172
Cleanthes.....	213	Q.....	209
Converi, a Unitarian.....	135	Reader, A Constant.....	252
Cree, Robert.....	71	Restrictor.....	58, 84
E.....	23	R. W.....	96, 240. 264
Fillingham, W.....	67	S.....	8
G.....	140. 183	S. M.....	144. 258
G. W. V.....	65	Senex.....	183
Humanitas.....	186	Stubbs, Joe.....	216
Ichneutes.....	47. 143	Styls, Jeremiah.....	233
Junius.....	115. 215	T.....	216
Juvenilis.....	23	Truth, a Lover of the.....	44
Justus.....	71	Tyro.....	251
K.....	15, 70, 113, 125, 157. 276	W. G.....	192
Liberal, A.....	165	Weaver, A.....	154
M.....	264	Wright, R. 7, 33, 56, 80, 103, 132,	
Moderator.....	111	162, 179, 203, 229, 254.....	272
Middle Class, one of the.....	278		

A Table of Texts Illustrated and Explained.

Gen. xix. 26.....	Page 193	Prov. xx. 22.....	Page 169
2 Sam. i. 18.....	25	—xx. 26.....	49
Job. xix. 25—29.....	242	Isaiah ix. 6.....	117
Psal. ii. 7.....	1	Matt. i. 16.....	98
—xiv. 6.....	2	John i. 30.....	74
—cx 1.....	ib.	Acts ii. 22.....	74
—cxxx. 5.....	3	Rom. ix. 5.....	121
Proverbs xix. 23.....	169	1 Cor. xv.....	32

The Christian Reflector, AND THEOLOGICAL INQUIRER.

"I speak as unto wise men; judge ye what I say." PAUL.

No. 53. LIVERPOOL, JANUARY 1st, 1824. Price 4½d

BIBLICAL CRITICISM.

We copy the following excellent articles from a valuable work lately published entitled "Oriental Literature," by Samuel Burder, in two volumes.

PSALM, II, 7.

Thou art my Son.

THIS expression of Jehovah, "thou art my son," signifies, thou art king. Kings and princes in the language of the ancient world were called the sons of God, according to the notion which was common to all antiquity, that the princely dignity was of divine origin, and sacred. Kings were regarded as the representatives and vicegerents of the gods. In Homer, "the sons of Jupiter," "descendants of the great Jupiter," "begotten of God," are the usual titles of kings and princes. The same custom prevailed among the ancient Egyptians and Persians. See K. D. Ilgen, *Commentat. de notione tituli Filii Dei, Messiae, hoc est, Uncto Jovae, in libris S. S. tributi, Jen. 1794.* reprinted in the Seventh Part of the Memorabilia, published by Dr. Paulus. The Chinese still call their emperor Tientsee, that is, the son of Heaven, or God. See Brand's Travels, p. 336. Du Halde's Description of the Chinese Empire, vol. ii. According to this notion, which was usual also among the Hebrews, Jehovah, (2 Sam. vii. 14.) speaking of the Great King, the Messiah, who is one day to arise in David's family, says, "I will be his father, and he shall be my son." And in Psalm lxxxix, 27. "Also I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth." Psalm lxxxii, 6. It is said of the kings of other nations, "Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the Most High." *Rosenmüller.*

Ps. xlv. 6. *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.*

The poet, in the above words, addresses the king by the title of god, because, according to the opinion of the ancients, kings were the representatives of the gods, and had their dignity from them, for which reason they were also called the sons of the gods. Hence it is said of princes, in Psalm lxxxii. 6. "Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the Most High. According to the testimony of several ancient writers, *god* was the common title of the king among the Assyrians and Persians. Even in the third and fourth century after the birth of Christ, the Persian kings, of the dynasty of the Sassanides, bore the title of god, as is proved by inscriptions on ancient monuments. See Silvestre de Sacy's *Mémoires sur diverses Antiquités de la Perse*, p. 35. A trace of the same notion is still found among the Betjuanes, a half savage nation in Southern Africa. "The title of the king is Murima, (lord) a word which is evidently allied to Murinna, a name by which they distinguish the Deity." Lichenstein's *Travels in Southern Africa*, vol. ii. p. 538. *Rosenmüller.*

Ps. cx. 1. *Sit thou at my right hand.*

The right hand, or the right side, was considered already in the most ancient times as the place of honour. Hence, Solomon made his mother sit on the right hand, to give her a mark of his respect: and Psalm xlv. 9. "The queen stands at the right hand of her consort." Thus Pindar, (Carm. Pind. Frag. by Schneider, p. 55.) says, that Minerva sits at the right hand of her father Jupiter, and gives his orders to the gods. In Callimachus (Hymn to Apollo, 28. § 29.), it is said that Apollo will reward the chorus, if it sings any thing worthy of him; this he can do, because he sits at the right hand of his father Jupiter. Among the ancient Arabic kings, who reigned in Hira, before Mahomet, the highest officer of state, next the king, who supplied his place, was called radaf, i. e. the follower. According to an Arabian author, (Monumenta Vetustiss. Hist. Arab. published by Eichhorn, p. 220.) this officer was always at the

king's right hand ; when the king drank at table, the radaf drank before all the rest ; when the king undertook a military expedition, the radaf filled his place, till his return, and received a fourth part of the booty made in war. *Niebuhr* relates, that when he had audience of the imam of the prince of Sana, in southern Arabia, the imam sat on his throne, with his sons on his right hand, and his brothers on his left. *Rosenmüller*.

Ps. cxxi. 5. *The Lord is thy shade on thy right hand.*

An umbrella is a very ancient, as well as honourable defence against the pernicious effects of the scorching beams of the sun, in those sultry countries ; may we not then suppose, this is the kind of shade the Psalmist refers to ?

Niebuhr, who visited the southern part of Arabia, gives us the following account of a solemn procession of the imam that resides at Sana, who is a great prince in that part of Arabia, and considered as a holy personage, being descended from Mohammed, their great prophet. It is well known, that the sultan at Constantinople goes every Friday to the mosque, if his health will at all admit of it. The imam of Sana observes also this religious practice, with vast pomp. We only saw him in his return, because this was represented to us as the most curious part of the solemnity, on account of the long circuit he then takes, and the great number of his attendants, after their having performed their devotions in other mosques. The imam was preceded by some hundreds of soldiers. He, and each of the princes of his numerous family, caused a mdallâ, or large umbrella, to be carried by his side, and it is a privilege, which, in this country, is appropriated to princes of the blood, just as the sultan of Constantinople permits none but his vizier to have his kaik, or gondola, covered behind, to keep him from the heat of the sun. They say that in the other provinces of Ymen, the independent lords, such for example as the sheiks of Jafa, and those of Haschid u Bekil ; the scherif of Abu Arisch, and many others, cause these mdallas in like manner to be carried for their use, as a mark of their independence. Be-

sides the princes, the imam had in his train at least six hundred lords of the most distinguished rank, as well ecclesiastics as seculars, and those of the military line, many of them mounted on superb horses, and a great multitude of people attended him on foot. On each side of the imam was carried a flag, different from ours, in that each of them was surmounted with a little silver vessel like a censer. It is said, that within, some charms were put, to which they attributed a power of making the imam invincible. Many other standards were unfurled with the same censer-like vessel, but without any regularity. In one word, the whole train was numerous, and in some measure magnificent, but no order seemingly was observed." *Voy tom. i. p. 337.*

PRAYING TO CHRIST.

An answer to the question, Why do you not pray to Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, but to God the Father only?

1. BECAUSE I consider prayer, not only to be a great privilege, but also a most solemn duty; and that I am accountable to God, and to him only for the manner in which I perform this duty; therefore I dare not pray to Christ and the Holy Spirit, without authority from God's word; but so far from prayer to Christ and the Spirit being authorized by the word of God, it appears to me contrary to what that word plainly teaches. In the New Testament I am directed to pray to the Father in the name of Christ, and to worship him in spirit and in truth; (John iv. 23, 24. and xvi. 23.) which is very different from praying to Christ and the Spirit.

2. Because, not being able to find any command, in the holy scriptures, to pray to Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, or to any other being but the one God the Father, if I prayed to any other being, it might be demanded of me, "who hath required this at your hands? and I should transgress the Divine command, quoted by Christ himself; (Matt. iv. 10.) *thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*

3. Because in the holy scriptures I can find no precedent or example, any more than command, for offering prayer to Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, or to any other invisible object, but to God the Father only.

4. Because to pray to any other invisible object but the one God the Father, would be contrary to the example which Jesus my Lord hath left me, whom as a christian I am bound to imitate and follow. No one will say that he ever prayed to himself; no instance of his having prayed to the Spirit can be produced; it is undeniable that he addressed all his prayers to the Father only: therefore if I imitate him, and pray as he prayed, I must address all my prayers to the Father only.

5. Because, as a disciple of Jesus Christ, I ought to be guided by what he taught: and he taught his disciples to address their prayers to the Father, nor did he ever teach them to pray to himself, or to the Holy Spirit. When the disciples came to him, saying, "Lord teach us to pray," he said when ye pray say *Our Father, who art in heaven*. Luke ii. 12. This was evidently teaching them to address their prayers to the Father only. If then I prayed to Christ, or to the Holy Spirit I should act contrary to what Christ himself taught respecting the object of prayer.

6. Because I wish to be a true and acceptable worshiper, and Jesus Christ asserted that *the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth*: for the Father *seeketh such to worship him*: and that the object of worship is a Spirit: John iv. 23, 24. Therefore if I prayed to any being but the Father, I should fear that I forfeited the character of a true worshiper; and if I prayed to a man who died, however exalted and glorified, I should not be worshiping him who is a spirit, but be in danger of being ranked with idolaters. It is not possible for me to err in addressing my prayers to the Father.

7. Because praying to Jesus Christ is repugnant to his own express declaration to his disciples. Referring to the time when he should be exalted, and be no longer visible to them, he said; (John xvi. 23.) *And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall*

ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Now as I cannot pray to Christ without asking something of him, and he hath said his disciples shall ask him nothing, when no longer visibly among them, but ask every thing of the Father in his name, that is as his disciples, for me to pray to Christ, instead of addressing all my prayers to the Father, would show disregard to the directions of Christ, and disobedience to him my appointed Lord.

8. Because if the words of Jesus to the apostle John, when he fell down to worship before his feet, "see thou do it not," be a prohibition of offering him divine worship, even though he should appear to us as he did to John, as God's angel or messenger, in glorious visions; much more may they be regarded as forbidding our praying to him, or offering him divine worship, who have no such evident vision of his person, but to whom he remains quite invisible. See Rev. xxii. 7, 8, 9.

9. Because I wish to follow the apostles and first christians as they followed Christ: and the apostles and first christians addressed their prayers to the Father only, even to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Acts iv. 24—30. The apostles addressed their prayer to God the maker of heaven and earth, and in their prayer spoke of Jesus Christ as his anointed, his holy child or servant. Paul said (Eph. iii. 14.) *I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*: and speaks (chap. ii. 18) of all christians both Jews and Gentiles, having access through Christ to the Father.

10. Because if the martyr Stephen, or the apostle Paul, addressed Jesus Christ, it was when they saw him personally, either in vision or literally, not when they had no such personal view of him: therefore such instances of Jesus Christ being addressed can be no precedent for me to follow to whom he is quite invisible.

11. Because the word worship when used in the New Testament, to express the homage and respect which Jesus received when on earth does not mean prayer; for those who were said to worship him did not pray to him as God: nor does the respect which Jesus received, as expressed by that

word, any more mean prayer or divine worship, than the people of Israel's worshiping David means that they prayed to him, &c., or than Nebuchadnezzar's falling down and worshiping Daniel, means that he prayed to Daniel, &c., or that the man at the feast mentioned in Luke xiv. was for his humility to become an object of prayer, &c., to all those who sat at the table. (1 Chron. xxix. 20. Dan. ii. 48.) The word worship literally means to bow down to; and I bow down to, reverence, honor and obey Jesus Christ; but I do not pray to him because he hath taught me to address all my prayers to his Father.

12. Because I think it the most safe, indeed the only safe way, to pray to God according to the plain directions given by Jesus Christ, and the example which he hath left me. I cannot abide too strictly by his instructions, nor adhere too closely to his example. In praying to the Father I pray to the same object as he did, and if I do it in sincerity and truth, God will hear and answer me; but if I turn aside from the directions of Jesus Christ, and leave his example, I may soon be lost in error and superstition, and expose myself to the charge of worshipping I know not what.

Such are my reasons for not praying to Jesus and the Holy Spirit, but to God the Father only: are they not scriptural? are they not of sufficient weight to justify my conduct? Let them who think we ought to pray to Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, and who censure and condemn us for not doing it, produce a single text of scripture in which we are commanded to pray to any other object but the Father, or a single instance from scripture, of prayer to the Holy Spirit, or of direct prayer to Jesus Christ when he was not present and visible, and I will acknowledge myself in an error in not praying to him; but they can do none of these things. Why then will they condemn us? This is our consolation that so long as we worship the Father in spirit and in truth our Lord pronounces us true worshipers.

R. WRIGHT.

DR. ADAM CLARKE AND THE DEVIL DENIERS.

To the Editors of the Christian Reflector.

GENTLEMEN,

The following is an extract from the writings of a man, who has done more than most men in his day, to turn the belief of a supposed evil omnipotent being into ridicule. After making the Devil into a monkey, the learned Dr. brands all who do not believe in the opinion, to be little short of God-denying Atheists. For it must be supposed whenever Dr. Clarke speaks of the Devil, he means his own celebrated monkey. This creature of the Doctor's imagination approaches, it is true, to the *Old Hairy Ones*, against the worship of which Moses speaks; but these were *goats* not *monkeys*, for the learned among the most ancient idolaters did not represent the objects of their worship or of their religious dread so much like themselves.—Now let the reader attend to the learned Doctor's *Philipic*.

The learned Dr. in his commentary on the first chapter of Job, that clause of the fifth verse which says, (and Satan came also among them) after having impressed his readers with the idea of a chief devil, more powerful and wicked than the rest, he goes on to say, "It is now fashionable to deny the existence of this evil spirit; and this is one of what St. John (Rev. ii. 24.) calls the depths of Satan; as he well knows they who deny his being will not be afraid of his power and influence; will not watch against his wiles and devices; will not pray to God for deliverance from the evil one; will not expect him to be trampled down under their feet, who has no existence; and, consequently, they will become an easy and unopposing prey to the enemy of their souls, by leading men to disbelieve and deny his existence, he throws them off their guard; and is then their complete master, and they are led captive by him at his will. It is well known that among all those who make any profession of religion, those who deny the existence of the devil are they who pray little or none at all; and are ap-

parently, as careless about the existence of God, as they are of the being of a devil. Piety to God is with them out of the question; for those who do not pray, *especially in private*, and I never met with the devil denier who did, have *no religion* of any kind, whatever pretensions they may choose to make."

I think none of your readers can mistake at what class of professing christians this learned L.L. D. and F. A. S. aimed this poisoned shaft, and I believe the master we both profess to follow, never wished his disciple to sit in judgment on his fellow servant. I am yours, a devil denier and a believer in the strict unity of God. *Yours truly, G. W. V.* S.

UNITARIANISM AND TRINITARIANISM.

If Jehovah be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him. ELIJAH.
No man can serve two masters, - - - - - JESUS.

To the Editors of the Christian Reflector.

GENTLEMEN,

Your correspondent G. W. V. seems displeased at what he calls the illiberal meaning I gave to the appellation "Calvinist"; he should have said "Calvinism," for it was the system I reprobated, and am not conscious of any misrepresentation of that system. By the term Calvinist, I meant one who calls himself so, after the Genevese Reformer; and upon reperusing my former communication I cannot discover that I have given any illiberal meaning to the appellation "Calvinist."

Your correspondent talks about a christian spirit, without saying in what that spirit consists and how it is to be manifested. There seems to me to be no small mistake on this head among those who are most in the habit of using the expression. The christian spirit is a spirit of benevolence, of meekness, of forgiveness, and this ought to be cultivated by all the followers of Jesus. This spirit, however, admits of no compromise with error; it does not forbid us to expose false opinions; to guard

the people against a system that is dishonorable to the character of God, and injurious to the happiness of our fellow men. It is not a spirit of indifference to truth; it is not the spirit of worldly prudence that can on all occasions become all things to all men. This, instead of being his spirit, is a spirit which Jesus never manifested; it is a spirit which dishonors him and his religion. Jesus reprobated, in the strongest language the opinions and conduct of the Scribes and Pharisees; and was their system more dishonorable to the character of God than Calvinism?

Your correspondent says, "Unitarians may be right, Trinitarians may be right." That Trinitarians may be honest and good men, I cheerfully admit; but does this prove the truth of Trinitarianism? If Trinitarianism be true, Unitarianism which is its opposite cannot be true. If we can admit the doctrine of the trinity to be true, then we must give up the evidence of the scriptures which is strong in favor of the Divine unity. If we admit that both are true, then we make the scriptures to teach two directly opposing systems, and must, consequently, regard them as teaching nothing definite on the subject.

Your correspondent says, the Trinitarians exercise their judgement, we Unitarians exercise ours. Now, whatever use the Unitarian makes of his reason, it is well known that the Trinitarian decries the use of reason, calls it carnal and vain, and regards its teachings as delusive. Faith with him is every thing, and he who can believe without the exercise of reason can believe any thing, the more unreasonable the more is it a subject of faith; for, as Dr. Watts sings:

Where reason fails with all her powers,
There faith prevails, and love adores.

Such an one will agree with Abbadie, that "though this proposition, *God was made man*, appeared to us a thousand times more absurd and contrary to right reason, yet we ought to be persuaded that our reason deceives us, and that this truth is certain, because it is contained in the word of God." This is

genuine Calvinism, and the man who has face enough to avow it, is an honest man. *It is possible to be*

I cannot tell what attention your correspondent has paid to the subject, but I do know that if he had ever been a Calvinist, and had felt but a hundredth part of the gloom which that system produces, and the horror with which it fills the mind, he would regard it as I do, as a system more dishonorable to God and more injurious to man than open and avowed infidelity. Let Calvinism be carried out to its legitimate consequences, and it will be found to lead to atheism. What can be more wicked and shocking than the sentiments Calvin expresses respecting every human being who comes into the world. "The very *infants* themselves, while they bring with them their own *damnation* from their *mother's womb*, are bound, not by another's, but by their own fault ; (the fault of being born which they could not prevent) for though they have not as yet brought forth the fruits of their own iniquity, yet they have the seeds thereof inclosed within them. Yea their *whole nature is a certain seed of sin*, therefore it cannot but be *hateful and abominable to God*. Wherefore it follows, that it is perfectly accounted sin before God, for there can be no *guiltiness without sin*." What father or mother can read such a sentence and allow for a moment that Calvinism *can*, much less *may* be right ? And while such a pestilence as this walketh the earth at noon day, all we have to do, according to your correspondent is, to acknowledge that it " *may be right*," and sit down and " *calmly and quietly* to compare our different opinions, and when we find them to disagree let us investigate, &c ;" this is not enough, for surely, were there no other horrid feature of Calvinism than that now exhibited, I hold myself justified in openly condemnig such a system, as completely alien from the christian doctrine and the christian spirit.

But your correspondent refers only to that part of the *psuedo* orthodox system which relates to the trinity, and which he supposes may be right, but he has assigned no reason for his opinion, except a supposition that the Trinitarians exercise their judgment, as well as the Unitarians, and therefore there *may*

be little or no difference between them. This reminds me of what once happened at a meeting of a Bible Society, at which a person, who professed himself a Unitarian, wishing to stand well in the opinion of the orthodox, asserted that the difference between them was merely nominal. A Calvinist, not wishing to shake hands so suddenly with this candid brother, declared, he had hoped the boyhood of opinion had gone by, and that in the present day men would be found honest enough to avow their real sentiments. I shall leave the application to your correspondent.

But can Trinitarianism be proved true? When it can be proved that three beings are no other than one being, and that one being is literally and absolutely three beings; when this can be demonstrated to be right, then and not till then can it be admitted that Trinitarianism *may* be right. Were a man to assert, that definition of a triangle may be true which represents the three angles as equal to two right angles; and that the definition of three angles being equal to only one right angle *may* also be true, we should think he had paid very little attention to Geometry, and he who can so coolly allow that two opposing systems may be right, has paid but little attention to the doctrines of the Bible.

Every allowance ought to be made for the difference of circumstances, the force of habit, the influence of education and connexions; but we must make no compromise with error, we should mingle christian charity and integrity together, and speak the truth in love; we best show our love and regard for our fellow men, when we use the means in our power to lead them from error to truth.

Wishing your correspondent to come to an early decision, not only which system *may* be, but which system, according to the evidences of nature and revelation, *is* true or right.

I remain, his and yours, respectfully,

PHILALETHES.

TRINITARIAN HYPOTHESES.

THE Athanasian Creed says, "the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God; this is the true faith, which, except a man keep whole and undefiled, he must without doubt perish everlastingly." The belief of the dogma of the trinity, is by all its advocates made a *sine quâ non* of salvation, and yet scarcely two of them agree in opinion on the subject. This at once proves that it is not a doctrine of Revelation; for all her doctrines are plain and easy to be understood, suited, to the condition and comprehension of the poor and illiterate among the sons of men. We may then safely reject the dark and inconsistent doctrine of a trinity, as a doctrine introduced into christianity from the heathen school, and never taught by Jesus the light of the world. We quote the following summary of the discordant opinions of writers on the doctrine of the trinity, from an excellent work, entitled, "An Inquiry into the Comparative Moral Tendency of Trinitarian and Unitarian Doctrines."

"The following is a classification of the opinions, which have been entertained concerning the trinity by some of the most eminent English divines.

"1. The Athanasians, among whom were Dr. Waterland, and probably Archbishop Secker, from the encomium he passes on the Athanasian Creed, maintained that the trinity consists of three distinct, independent, and equal persons, constituting one and the same God; or in other words, that the 'Father is Almighty, the Son is Almighty, the Holy Ghost is Almighty, and yet there are not three Almighties, but one Almighty.' 2. According to Mr. Howe's theory, there are three, distinct, intelligent hypostases, each having a distinct, intelligent nature, united in some inexplicable manner, so as to make one God, in somewhat the same way as the corporeal, sensitive, and intellectual faculties are united to form one man. 3. Dr. Wallis was an advocate for the Sabellian hypothesis; and held that the three persons in the trinity were only three modes, or relations, which the Deity bears to his creatures. This also was probably the opinion of Archbishop Tillotson. 4. Bishop Pearson supposed the Father to be an undervived essence, and the Son to have received every thing by communication from God the Father. 'Here can be but one person,' says he,

'originally of himself subsisting in that infinite Being, because a plurality of more persons so subsisting would necessarily infer a plurality of Gods.' The Son possessed the whole divine nature by communication, and not by participation, and in such a way, that he was as really God, as the Father. Bishop Bull and Dr. Owen adopted a similar theory. 5. In the system of Dr. Thomas Burnet, the Father is a self-existent Being, the Son and Spirit are dependent; but so united, that divine perfections and worship may be ascribed to each. 6. Mr. Baxter defines the three divine persons to be wisdom, power, and love; and illustrates his meaning by the vital power, intellect, and will, in the soul of man, and by motion, light, and heat, in the sun. For this explanation he was indebted to the sharpened wits of the schoolmen.

"7. Bishop Burgess supposes the three persons to make one God, but does not allow, that these persons are three beings, He makes out his position by the following syllogism. 'The Scriptures declare that there is only one God; the same scriptures declare that there are three omnipresent persons, but there cannot be three omnipresent beings. According to this hypothesis the trinity is made up of three nonentities called persons. 8. Bishop Gastrell says, "The three names of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, must denote a threefold difference, or distinction, belonging to God, but such as is consistent with the unity and simplicity of the divine nature; for each of these includes the whole idea of God, and something more. So far as they express the nature of God, they all adequately and exactly signify the same. It is the additional signification, which makes all the distinction between them.' According to Bishop Gastrell, then, each person of the trinity includes the whole idea of God, and something more, but when all taken together, they make the idea of one God, and no more. 9. A scheme, which certainly vies with any other for novelty, is that lately advanced by Mr. Heber, in his Bampton Lectures. He has made the discovery, that the second and third persons in the trinity are no other than the angels Michael and Gabriel. It was the second person, who conversed with Moses on Mount Sinai; and the third person, who constituted the Jewish Schekinah. To clear up this point, the erudite lecturer levies most heavily on the Jewish Rabbies, the Targums, the Mahometan doctors, and the ancient fathers. Lastly, I will mention only one scheme more, which is that of Dr. Sherlock, as contained in his Vindication of the Doctrine of the trinity. He says, 'The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are as really distinct persons, as Peter, James, and John; each of which is God. We must allow each person to be a God. These three infinite minds are distinguished, just as three created minds are, by self consciousness; and by mutual consciousness, each person of these has the whole wisdom, power,

and goodness of the other two.' This scheme differs little from the Athanasian, except in being more clear and definite.'"

"Such are some of the modes in which the trinity has been represented by those, who have been most zealous to defend the doctrine. And even here we have only the outlines, the elements, of general systems, which have been divided and subdivided into innumerable new and peculiar forms, bearing little resemblance to their originals. Which of these trinities is the one, that shall make a man a true christian? Which is sealed with the stamp of orthodoxy; and which is to be relied on as an article of saving faith?"

Dr. Adam Clarke's Commentary on Matthew iii. 16; with Mr. Grundy's Remarks on the parallel passage, Luke iii. 22.

To the Editors of the Christian Reflector.

GENTLEMEN,

Thinking that the following might probably be suitable for your valuable Publication, I have been induced to transcribe it. Should you be of the same opinion, I shall feel obliged by its insertion. K.

Dr. Adam Clarke, in his Commentary on Matt. iii. 16, "the Spirit of God descended upon him like a dove, &c. makes the following observations.

"This passage affords no mean proof of the doctrine of the trinity. That three distinct persons are here represented, there can be no dispute. 1. The person of Jesus Christ, baptized by John, in Jordan. 2. The person of the Holy Ghost in a bodily shape, like a dove. 3. The person of the Father; a voice came out of heaven, saying, 'this is my beloved Son, &c.'"

Mr. Grundy, in his lecture on "the Distinct Existence and Personality of the Holy Ghost," arguing on the Trinitarian hypothesis, in reference to the parallel passage in Luke iii. 22. makes the following remarks; which may be well to append to the above.

"The voice that was uttered must have been the voice of the Father, because he was the only person in the godhead left in heaven. The second person in the trinity was standing

in the river to be washed by a man ; the third person in the trinity was hovering in the air in the shape of a dove ;—each of the two latter was confined to a single spot, the one in the shape of a man, the other of a brute ; the government of all the systems of worlds in the universe was neglected by them, and their attention exclusively directed to a few people in Judea !! Christians ! it is far from my wish to misrepresent, or to turn the creed of another to ridicule : but, seriously, it does appear to me, that this pompous argument* is founded upon the principle and reasoning I have now stated. You believe the result, and yet, methinks, you are ashamed to look those principles in the face upon which that result is founded. If you can give me any other (rational, nay, any other) foundation upon which this inference is built, I assure you I will never urge it again.

But as this argument must infallibly destroy the omnipotence, at least of the Son and Holy Spirit, perhaps you will deny the validity of the reasoning, and contend, with other Trinitarians, that the Son and Holy Spirit were still inherent in God the Father. Then again, remark the consequences, for I still ask, and must ask for consistency, Was each person present with the other two persons, at the time of which we are now speaking ? In this case, Christ, equally with the Father and Spirit, spake from heaven, and called himself his own beloved Son ; the Father and Spirit descended into the river and were baptized ; and the Father and Son descended upon the Son in the shape of a dove. This must follow, unless the essence of the Father be different from the essence of the Son and of the Spirit, and if they are different they must be three Gods.—Further, upon your construction of the passage, I also argue thus : either Jesus was God or a man at the time he went into the river to be baptized. If he was God, then God descended upon God. If this was only his human nature, and he had left his divinity in heaven, then it was not his own deity which descended to him, but the Holy Spirit's ; consequently, the Christ was composed of the man Jesus and the third person

* See Dr. Hawker's Sermons, vol. ii. p. 92.

in the Trinity; no account is given of the second. This inference really appears to me unavoidable upon your system.

Let me again reason in a different way. This passage is either figurative or literal. If it be merely figurative, you have no argument for the distinct personality of the Holy Spirit, the whole of your reasoning is built upon its literal interpretation. Then what follows? 1st. That the invisible God was absolutely seen and moved about from place to place. 2nd, That a brute animal was really and truly God; for remember, it must be literal; a real dove, flesh and blood, descended, and this was actually God. 3rd, This person, this dove, descended upon Jesus and infused divinity into him. Or, 4th, If this was only the person of the Holy Spirit, and the essence left in heaven, he would not infuse what he did not possess. And in this case, 5th, The Holy Spirit must have two natures as well as Jesus Christ, one divine the other brutal.

How much more easy and rational is it to explain the passage in some such manner as the following. That when the man Jesus had been baptized by John, there was a bright luminous appearance in the sky, in form like a dove, which descended towards Jesus. Into him was then infused the divine spirit, or a power of controlling the laws of nature, and a voice from above was heard, "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased." The immediate agency or operation of the Deity was frequently made known by a luminous appearance; in the bush to Moses, in a pillar of fire, in the tabernacle by his glory or Shechinah; and the passage in Acts speaks of the cloven tongues being "like as of fire." The expression of Luke too is merely that it appeared in a corporeal form, not that it was a real body or person. And he adds, "like a dove," alluding to its descent like a dove. The other evangelists only say, "that the Spirit descended on him like a dove."

In the above extracts, we have a striking specimen of the repulsive character of the Trinitarian doctrine. Judge reader, whether such a system can be true, but whether it can have any other tendency, than to disbandon christianity, and retard its progress in the world.

The Caterer,

No. XIV.

"Plinius major dicere solebat, nullum esse librum tam malum, ut non aliquâ parte posset prodesse."

*The following Letter was written by Pope Gregory, to Phocas, who had murdered the Emperor Mauritius and placed himself on his throne.**

"GLORY be to God in the highest, who, according as it is written, changeth the times and transfers kingdoms; that also is manifest to all, which he has condescended to speak by his prophet, saying, the highest ruleth in the kingdom of men, and he giveth it to whom he pleaseth: the regiments of mortal life are in the incomprehensible dispensation of almighty God; and so when the sins of many that are righteous are to be smitten, one is exalted by whose hardness the necks of the subjects are depressed with the yoke of tribulation; and which we in our affliction have long experienced; at another time again, when the merciful God has decreed to comfort the hearts of many mourners with his consolation, he raiseth one to the top of the empire, through the bowels of whose mercy, he pours the grace of his rejoicings into the minds of all, with the abundance of which joys we the sooner believed we should be strengthened, because we rejoiced so upon the benignity of your piety being raised to the empire. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad upon your gracious deeds, and let all the people of the commonwealth, who hitherto have been so grievously afflicted, triumph: may the proud minds of your enemies be depressed by the yoke of your domination; and the contrite and distressed minds of subjects be raised by your mercy; may the virtue of the heavenly grace make you terrible to the enemies, and piety make you benign to the subjects: may the whole common-

[* In our last number, (p. 280) in the head of the page, a mistake occurred, which the reader is requested to correct thus, after "Gregory" read "against John," Bishop of Constantinople.]

wealth be in peace in your most happy times, and may the prey of peace under the pretence of actions be removed. Let the snares of testaments, and the free gifts violently exacted, cease; and let the secure possession of their goods return to all; that so they may rejoice in the enjoyment of those goods without fear, which they have acquired without fraud: and let every one's liberty be restored under the yoke of your pious empire; for the difference which is between the kings of the nations, and the emperors of the commonwealth, is, that the kings of the nations are lords of slaves, but the emperors of the republic are lords of freemen: but we can express this by praying better than by suggesting. May almighty God therefore by his grace hold your piety's heart in his hand, in every thought and deed; and may the holy spirit, by dwelling in your heart dispose it to do every thing that is just and merciful: that so your clemency after a long reign on earth, may attain the heavenly kingdom."

The Monk of St. Anthony.

"THE following story is contained in the Book of the *Apologie pour Hérodote*, which was written about the year 1500, by Henry Etienne, on purpose to shew that those who entirely reject the facts related by Herodotus, on account of their incredibility, treat him with too much severity, since a number of facts daily happen, which are altogether as surprising as those that are found in that author.

"Before relating the story in question, the reader ought to be informed that St. Anthony is commonly thought to have a great command over fire, and a power of destroying, by flashes of that element, those who incur his displeasure; the common people having been led into this belief, by constantly seeing a fire placed by the side of that saint, in the representations that are made of him, though this fire is placed there for no other reason, than because the saint is also thought to have the power of curing the *crysipelas*, otherwise called the *sacred fire* (*ignis sacer*) in the same manner as St. Hubert cures the

hydrophobia, St. John the epilepsy, and other saints other disorders. A certain monk of St. Anthony, (to come to our point,) who was well acquainted with the above prepossession of the vulgar concerning the power of his saint, used, on Sundays, to preach in public, in different villages within a certain distance from his convent. One day, he assembled his congregation under a tree on which a magpye had built her nest, into which he had previously found means to convey a small box, filled with gunpowder, which he had well secured therein; and out of the box, hung a long thin match, that was to burn slowly, and was hidden among the leaves of the tree. As soon as the monk, or his assistant, had touched the match with a lighted coal, he began his sermon. In the mean while the magpye returned to her nest; and finding in it a strange body which she could not remove, she fell into a passion, and began to scratch with her feet, and chatter unmercifully. The friar affected to hear her without emotion, and continued his sermon with great composure; only he would now and then lift up his eyes towards the top of the tree, as if he wanted to see what was the matter. At last, when he judged the match was very near reaching the gunpowder, he pretended to be quite out of patience, he cursed the magpye, and wished St. Anthony's fire might consume her, and went on again with his sermon; but he had scarcely pronounced two or three periods, when the match on a sudden produced its effect, and blew up the magpye, with her nest; which miracle wonderfully raised the character of the friar, and proved afterwards very beneficial to him and his convent."—*Hist. of Flagellants.*

Religious Intelligence.

The Lancashire and Cheshire Unitarian Missionary Society.

THIS society has just published their Quarterly Report, from which the following are extracts.

This society has now been in operation about a year and a quarter, and the benefits which, under Divine Providence, have

resulted from the labors of its missionaries, even in this short space of time, are such as to justify the committee in congratulating their friends on the results of the exertions they have hitherto made, and certainly furnish a strong encouragement for them to persevere in so animating a cause.

The following statement of the labors of the missionary preachers, who have acted on behalf of the society, will, the committee trust, be gratifying to the friends of Unitarian christianity.

Middleton has been supplied with preaching on the Sunday afternoons, and frequently also on the evenings, ever since the commencement of the society. The congregation at this place has always been a remarkable steady one, and though for some time there appeared to be no great increase of its numbers, the committee feel gratified in finding, that lately this congregation has received a considerable accession of members; while at the same time the prejudices which were formerly felt in this place against Unitarianism, have been much lessened. Class meetings for conversation on the doctrines of religion, have recently been opened in this place on Tuesday evenings; these meetings have been very numerously attended, and the candor with which the sentiments of the Unitarians have been listened to, affords a strong ground for hoping that much good will result from them.

Swinton and Irlams have been supplied with preaching ever since the formation of the society, and the congregations at both these places are in a favorable state. This is particularly the case with regard to the former station, at which there is a society of Unitarians which the committee conceive, do credit to the cause. Beside the Sunday evening services, there are also meetings held alternately at these stations on the Monday evenings, at which a sermon is preached, or a religious tract read to the society, and by these meetings the committee think much good has been done.

Astley has been supplied with preaching by this society from the commencement. But in consequence of the services being performed either in the open air, or in a barn exposed to the inclemencies of the weather, no regular society has been formed here. The preachings have, notwithstanding been very well attended, and a considerable impression has been produced on the minds of the inhabitants. The committee cannot, however, too much lament the want of a suitable place in which to conduct the services at this station.

Leigh has been regularly supplied with preachers for the last quarter, and though it is impossible in so short a time to judge of the effects of these services, the committee feel pleasure in stating that the attendances have been hitherto very good, and that the prospect at this place is certainly highly encouraging.

Blackburn has been supplied by this society about three quarters of a year, and the congregation at this place is an extremely steady one. The attendance in the afternoon and evening has generally been very considerable. The society at this place were lately in considerable pecuniary difficulties, in consequence of the expences incurred for fitting up their present place of worship; but the committee are happy to state, that the debt has been considerably reduced by the liberality of the Unitarian public, and they trust that ere long the congregation will, by the same means, be entirely relieved from their present burdens.

In the neighborhood of Blackburn there have been services performed on behalf of the society at Houghton Tower, Waterloo, and Mellor, and at the two former stations, it is intended still to continue the services.

Wigan has been supplied with preaching (though not uninterruptedly) from the commencement of this society; and though some time ago there did not appear to be much good effected, the prospect seems at present to be considerably brightened.

Oldham was supplied with evening Lectures by this society during the last winter, which were well attended, and lately this place has been made a regular station; but too recently to enable the society to lay any definite statement before their friends of the effect produced.

An attempt has also been made at Hollin-wood, where a considerable field for exertion appears to be open.

Todmorden has also been supplied with preachers by this society at the expense of the congregation. At this place there is a considerable society already formed. A chapel is also building, and the committee trust that the congregation will soon be in a situation to engage a regular minister.

Park Lane and Hindley were supplied with preaching by this society while they were without regular ministers.

Sunday schools are established at the following places:— Middleton, Swinton, Irlams, Blackburn, Oldham, Wigan and Leigh; and most of these schools are in a flourishing condition. At Middleton above one hundred scholars are educated. At Swinton there are nearly that number. At Irlams, the scholars are not so numerous, the school having been lately established. At Blackburn, the school, though a small one, is well conducted, and the number of the scholars is increasing.

Libraries have been formed at Middleton, Swinton, Irlams, Blackburn, Oldham, Wigan and Todmorden. Some donations of books have been received, and distributed among these places, and gifts of this kind would be very acceptable to the society.

Original Poetry.

*A Christian's examination of himself on the commencement
of the New Year.*

Another year, with all its scenes, is past;
 What have I done that's worthy of record?
 Have I perform'd Heav'n's will? or not?
 If not, what then?—why 'tis the will of man,
 Of man, that feeble, trembling, fickle thing,
 That creature of a day; akin to worms;
 Call'd into life, and health, and strength, by HIM
 Whose presence fills all space; whose wisdom, pow'r,
 And love are infinite. I fain would hope
 That I have not, with wilful mind and heart,
 Thus set at nought the wise and just commands
 Of such a friend as he has been to me;
 Nor thus despis'd his promises, who was
 My sole support each moment of that year
 Which is so quickly fled. It would be base
 Thus wickedly his just request to spurn,
 And with ingratitude most foul, to stand
 In dread array against my Maker, God.
 But what says conscience? does she whisper peace?
 Or, does she not accuse? does she make known
 No time mispent; no talent misapplied;
 No blessing of indulgent heav'n abused;
 No opportunity of doing good
 Neglected?—does she speak of none of these?
 Alas! to these, and more, much more, than these,
 I must plead guilty—Who among the sons
 Of mortal men can say with truth, in these
 I've not offended?—Be it even so
 I still have hope, that, if with spirit meek,
 With heartfelt sorrow, and humility,
 I promise to reform, and, if the year,
 Which now is come, be spent with more regard
 To his commands, he freely will forgive
 My past offences. Thus may I resolve
 To live,—if life his will permit,—this year
 And on this resolution, let me muse.

JUVENILIS.

LINES ON THE NEW YEAR.

The infant year begins its race
 With days and hours anew;
 May I all idle pleasures chase,
 Fair virtue to pursue.

Clad in a robe of spotless white,
 Transparent, bright and clear,
 Her actions ever court the light,
 She hails the opening year.
 While trav'ling through life's onward space,
 May I her steps attend ;
 Then at its close may she embrace
 And own me as her friend.
 If frailty's child perchance to stray,
 May I, with heart sincere,
 Attempt to point out virtue's way
 With sympathetic tear.
 Should sorrow's son attract mine eye,
 With griefs assail mine ear ;
 May I, with pity's kind reply,
 His drooping spirits cheer.
 Oft have I o'er departing friends
 Dropt sweet affection's tear,
 Kind heaven in mercy still extends
 My life another year.
 O then my muse a hymn of praise,
 In strains harmonious sing ;
 And let thy harp attune its lays,
 To heaven's Eternal King.
 Thy mighty hand, O Great Supreme,
 Hath led me thro' the past ;
 Thy goodness, like an endless stream,
 Will flow while time doth last.
 If thou should'st fortune's gifts deny,
 Guard me from anxious fear ;
 Thy bounty can my wants supply
 Through ev'ry future year.
 Gay fancy through the passing year
 Presents new hopes and joys,
 Like time the phantoms disappear,
 And fade before our eyes.
 But thou, O God, art still the same,
 Unerring, wise and just ;
 Thou well rememberest our frame,
 And know'st we are but dust.
 For all that I have done amiss,
 Thy pardon I implore ;
 Oh, take my soul to endless bliss,
 When time shall be no more. E.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

R. Wright's Essay on the Christian Ministry shall appear in our next.
Zeno is received.

The Christian Reflector, AND THEOLOGICAL INQUIRER.

"I speak as unto wise men; judge ye what I say." PAUL.

No. 54. LIVERPOOL, FEBRUARY 1st, 1824. Price 4½d

BIBLICAL CRITICISM.

2 SAMUEL, I, 18.

*Also he bade them teach the Children of Judah the (use of the)
Bow: Behold it is written in the Book of Jashar.*

EVERY attempt to elucidate particularly obscure passages of scripture we conceive to be laudable. Such passages are generally laid hold on by disbelievers in the scriptures, who do not take the trouble to inquire whether the translation be correct or not, to discredit the whole. The above passage is one of them, and we present our readers with the following remarks, from the works of the learned John Gregorie, published A. D. 1684.

"A strange parenthesis to all respects, but especially that of the Bow. Yet so the Targum reads it, and so the Rabbins constantly expound. Rab. Solomon's gloss is, And David said—from henceforth seeing that the mighty in Israel are slain, it will be necessary that the men of Judah learn to exercise their arms, and to draw the Bow. Levi Ben Gersom, saith that inasmuch as David saw that the death of Saul was caused by his fear of the Bowmen, and that there was none in Israel skill'd in this kind of artillery, he gave order that the men of Judah, (as being the principal men at arms) should be taught the use of the Bow, &c. To the same purpose R. David, and others quoted in the Celi Jakar, fol. 264. a and b. And yet R. Isay saith, that Saul and Jonathan taught the sons of Judah the Bow, because the sons of Judah were mighty men, and fit to draw the bow by the blessing of Jacob, Gen. xlix. 8. Where it is prophesied that the hand of Judah shall be in the neck of his enemies, that is, (saith Chimhi as some of our

wisemen expound) the Bow. Therefore they take the book of Jasher to be the first of Moses called Genesis, in which the acts of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob the Jesharim, or upright men are recorded; but especially they take the book to be Beracoth Jacob, or the blessings of Jacob. Thus the Jews.

Though we have wisemen of our own to follow them in the interpretation of the Bow: yet they will appear to be as idle in this, as in their conceit of the book.

Is it a thing to be thought that the men of Judah were now to learn the use of the Bow? 'Twas the common tactick practice.

The Hebraism of Bow is like that of bread; it nameth for all other kind of ammunition. And where's the consequence here that because Saul and Jonathan (excellent archers themselves, for the bow of Jonathan turned not back) fell down before the arrows of the Philistines, that therefore the men of Judah should be taught the use of the Bow? But the coherence is worse. And David, &c.

The author of the book bringeth David in beginning an Epicedium upon the death of Saul and Jonathan, and immediately breaketh him off with an impertinent command to the Sons of Judah, that they should learn to handle the Bow. And where is it, or why is it that this should be written in the book of Jasher?

Therefore Marania very understandly stept aside out of the common road of interpretation, and considered with himself that the Bow here might be taken for the title of the song, which cannot be strange to them that will compare this with the granted superscriptions upon David's Psalms, as Psal. 69. To the chief musician upon Shoshannim. Psal. 67. Upon Neginoth. Psal. 59. To the chief musician Altashith, &c. So here to the chief musician Kesheth, or the Bow. For so the text is to be read. And he bade them, that is, the chief musicians, Heman, Ethan, and Jeduthun, to teach the ignorant people how to sing this lamentation of David upon the death of Saul and Jonathan. It was intituled Kesheth, or the Bow, because it was occasioned by the Philistine archers, 1 Sam.

xxi. 3. But especially respecting the Bow of Jonathan, which returned not back from the blood of the slain, as the song itself expresseth. And David could not but remember the Bow of Jonathan out of which that arrow was shot beyond the lad, 1 Sam. xx. 36. It was the time when that covenant was made, and that affection expressed betwixt them which was greater than the love of women.

The lxx will bear out this interpretation. The version there is, And David lamented this lamentation upon Saul and Jonathan his Son, and caused it to be taught to the Sons of Judah. Behold it is written in the book of the just man. So the vulgar. Therefore also by these two great authorities that which the sons of Judah were commanded to learn was not the use of the Bow, but the Bow, as 'tis originally set down, that is, a song of David so called, or this song of lamentation over Saul and Jonathan. And this is that which was written in the book of Jasher. Why this book was so called, or who was the author of it, I cannot tell you. One thing is evident that not the use of the Bow, but the Song of the Bow, was recorded therein. To this agrees the old translation of Tindall, 'and David sang this song of mourning over Saul and over Jonathan his Son, and bade to teach the children of Israel the staves thereof.'"

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY DEFENDED, AND PRIEST-CRAFT EXPLODED.

"But be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your master even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your Father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters; for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." Matt. xxiii. 8—12.

INTRODUCTION.

Two things have brought the christian ministry into disrepute, and tended to counteract its holy influence and prevent the

important effects it is designed to produce in the world, and will continue to do so until men in general can be brought to examine things more carefully, to judge more impartially, and to distinguish the real ministers of Christ, who are influenced by pure and benevolent motives, whose steady aim is the good and salvation of men, from those who assume that character from selfish and worldly motives, and whose object is their own ease, honor and emolument, or power and aggrandizement. One of the things referred to, which has operated to the discredit and counteraction of the christian ministry, is the false notions men have generally formed of it, and the misrepresentation very commonly given of those who are engaged in it, as to their religious views, motives and conduct. The other thing which tends to the disrepute of the christian ministry, is the confounding the true ministers of the word of life with worldly minded priests, and those who assume dominion over faith and conscience, or who seek to be distinguished as a privileged order, and claim titles and prerogatives, which separate them from their fellow christians, and give them a pre-eminence in the church of God. Nothing is more common, with many persons, than to speak of all christian teachers as priests, and to represent all who devote themselves to the work of the ministry, as their sole employment, if they be supported by their brethren while they do this, as hireling and mercenary priests: than which nothing can be more unjust. Christian ministers, and priests ought ever to be distinguished; and the laborer in word and doctrine, who is supported that he may so labor, should be regarded in a very different light from him whose object is worldly. The design of this Essay is to show the difference between christian ministers and priests, and the christian ministry and priestcraft, to defend the former and explode the latter; and this is, surely, an object of no small importance. Ministers whose study and labor it is to serve the cause of truth and righteousness, not merely to make the cause serve them, whose highest glory it is to render themselves a blessing to their fellow creatures, will, by all reasonable and impartial men who understand christianity, be thought

worthy of double honor ; but those who engage in the ministry merely as a genteel profession, that they may live more at their ease, and appear more respectable in the eyes of the world, than they could otherwise do, who assume consequential airs and lord it over their brethren, who play the priest, ought to be discountenanced, they deserve only censure and pity : instead of benefiting, they are injurious to the cause of genuine christianity.

Sect. 1. Priestcraft—The christian priesthood—Christian ministers not priests—No privileged order established by Christ and his Apostles.

Simplicity and godly sincerity are essential to true and genuine christianity. All duplicity, artifice and craft are repugnant to its nature, contrary to its express precepts, and have a tendency to counteract its influence and effects. It is said of Christ, that no guile was found in his mouth. (1 Pet. ii. 22.) He declared Nathanael to be an Israelite indeed, because in him was no guile. (John i. 47.) The apostolic exhortations were not of deceit, nor in guile : (1 Thess. ii. 3.) Paul declared that he and his fellow labourers in the gospel, had renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, that they did not walk in craftiness, nor handle the word of God deceitfully ; but by manifestation of the truth commended themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. 11 Cor. 4. 2. He describes those who laid in wait to deceive as using sleight and cunning craftiness. (Ephes. iv. 14.) Whenever men make use of craft in religion there is reason to think they have something in view which will not fully bear the light, that not the promotion of truth and righteousness, but something else is their object ; for he that doeth truth cometh to the light (John iii. 21.) But to establish a priesthood under the christian name, support its proud claims, and secure its unchristian objects, much craft was necessary : the coming of the man of sin was with all deceiveableness of unrighteousness. (Thess. ii. 10.) When once a system of priestcraft had obtained footing, many would fall in with it without perceiving its deceiveableness, or suspecting it to be repugnant to genuine chris-

tianity. The word craft is capable of being understood either in a good or bad sense. It may mean an honest employment, it may mean artifice and cunning, the wily practices of designing men ; it may mean the contrivances of worldly wisdom, under the guise of religion, and the specious pretence of the glory of God and the good of the church, while the promotion of some unchristian design, or the gratification of some selfish principle is the real object, I shall be understood in this Essay to use the word in a bad sense, and chiefly in the last mentioned.

Those who have practised priestcraft, have not told the world that this was the case ; that they could not be expected to do ; they may have even endeavored to conceal from themselves their real motives ; at any rate, they have ever wished the world to believe that the honor of God and the promotion of religion was their object. This is illustrated by the case of Demetrius and the craftsmen at Ephesus, of which we have an account, Acts, ch. xix- Alarmed by the preaching of Paul, and fearing its influence upon the people would greatly injure if not ruin his trade as the maker of shrines for Diana, he called the craftsmen together, those whom he employed in this lucrative branch of superstition, or who were interested in upholding it, and to them, as persons interested in supporting the reigning superstition and idolatry, he made use of no disguise, he stated the real ground of his opposition to Paul, because he wanted them to unite with him, either to destroy Paul, or drive him from the city, he said plainly ; “ Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth ; but as this was not an argument exactly suited to the multitude who were not craftsmen, and who derived no emolument from shrinemaking, he and his associates made a great outcry against Paul and his companions as enemies to the established religion and worship, and impugnors of the honor and glory of the great goddess Diana. Such has been the conduct of worldly minded priests and shrinemakers in all ages and countries ; while their real object has been the securing of their own honor, power and emolument, they have pretended to be influenced by a regard

to the glory of God and the safety of religion. To those who have derived all their views of christianity from the New Testament, it may appear strange, that an order of men should arise among christians, avowing themselves to be priests, and that a religious hierachy should be established, under the name of the christian church, governed by rulers distinguished by worldly titles, armed with worldly power, exercising dominion over the faith and consciences of men of all ranks, living in splendor and claiming as their right ample emoluments. Nothing has taken place, since the first introduction of christianity, so injurious to its character, so inimical to its success, and so subversive of all its principles, as the establishment of what is called the christian priesthood. This has grossly corrupted the whole system, and produced the greatest obstacles to its influence and effect in the world. Among the professed disciples of Jesus, who taught a system of perfect liberty, of the most complete religious equality, of entire christian brotherhood under which the supreme law was that of love, and the highest honor that of being servant of all; among his professed followers, the most arrogant pretensions, the most haughty spirit of priestly domination, and the most tyrannical ecclesiastical proceedings, have been found: and even among those who have protested against the proud claims, the anti-christian usurpations, and cruel proceedings of the church of Rome, much of the same spirit and practice has prevailed. Down to the present time, even among protestant Dissenters, much of priestcraft and of religious tyranny still exist. It is highly necessary that these things should be openly exposed to view, and mankind guarded against their baneful influence and effects.

To trace the rise and progress of what is called the christian, but ought to be called the antichristian, priesthood, is not proposed in the present Essay, nor could it well be brought within the limits I propose to myself in writing. Suffice it to say, that an order of men so inimical to christian liberty, a system so incompatible with genuine christianity and all its leading principles, could not spring up at once, nor be at all

established but by the subversion of the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and the gross perversion of the doctrines which he and his apostles taught. Judaizing teachers began the system of corruption, philosophizing professors of the gospel, who heathenized christianity, carried it on, and the unnatural union of church and state, after the boasted conversion of the emperor Constantine, which should rather be called a conversion of the reputed spouse of Christ into the shameless prostitute of the civil power, prepared the way for its completion.

Christianity, as it stands in the New Testament, knows nothing of any priesthood but that of Jesus Christ, and of the whole body of christians without exception. Christ was not an high priest while on earth; but, as exalted and glorified, he is, in figurative language, called such. Christians are all called priests, because they all have equal access to the Father, through Jesus Christ, and are called to offer spiritual sacrifices. Priests among the Jews and heathen were not called such on account of their being teachers; but as they slaughtered and offered animals in sacrifice. Christian ministers are not called to be butchers, to kill bullocks and rams, and offer them upon the altar. Neither the apostles, nor any other christian ministers are called priests in the New Testament, nor are they ever spoken of as made priests in distinction from the body of christians at large, who are said to be made kings and priests unto God.

Christianity, as taught by Jesus and his apostles, knows nothing of a distinct privileged order among christians; and the establishment of such an order is subversive of its most essential and leading principles. The New Testament teaches that all christians are brethren and fellow servants, and allows of no road to honor and distinction, but by superior humility and usefulness. "He that will be greatest among you," said Jesus, "let him become the least of all, and servant of all." Christian ministers are brethren among their brethren, servants among their fellow servants, and nothing more; but as gifted brethren, best qualified to teach others and conduct public

services, they are called to take the lead, and are to be honored and rewarded according to their talents, virtues, and services; and, if they have right views of the gospel, they will seek for no other distinction.

Christian churches were at first an union of brethren in the common faith, who agreed to walk together in mutual love, who met together to edify one another, and enlighten their fellow creatures. They had then no masters among them, none who had dominion over their faith, or who controlled their consciences. There was no mystery in their religion, no craft in their proceedings, no domination exercised among them. Alas! it has since been far otherwise; primitive simplicity, equality and brotherhood have been subverted; much of the spirit of genuine christianity is lost, and the glory is departed.

Primitive christianity cannot be revived any further than we return to its original simplicity and purity. We must separate it from its corruptions, strip it of its false ornaments and artificial decorations, which conceal its real beauty and deform it. It must not be left in the hands, and to the management of those who convert religion into a trade, and prostitute it to the purposes of worldly honor and emolument. The craft of priests, whether they assume the name, or without the name show that they possess the spirit of priests, and are as truly religious craftsmen as Demetrius and his companions, must be detected and exposed.

R. WRIGHT.

(To be continued.)

THEOLOGY OF MILTON'S POEM.

To the Editors of the Christian Reflector.

GENTLEMEN,

Frequently in the course of my perambulations, has it been my lot to come in contact with the advocates of what is called "evangelical faith;" and not a little amused have I often been to observe the curious methods by which they attempted to persuade themselves and others, that the

undefinable something is "God's truth." Any thing in nature which is supposed to bear any kind of analogy to their hypothesis is called in to prove its truth, and passages are quoted from the Bible to support it which have no more relation to the subject than has a proposition from Euclid. I remember one of these sage reasoners insisted that Christ must be God, because we read in Genesis, "God said unto Adam *where* art thou?" and in the New Testament Jesus said respecting Lazarus, "*Where* have ye laid him?" Thus in every part, nay in almost every sentence of the Bible they can see their favorite doctrine. And because the trinity has now been long and generally espoused, and has consequently strongly tintured the writings of numerous celebrated authors, and found its way into many standard works both of poetry and prose, its advocates demand as much in its favor on this account, as on account of the supposed arguments for its truth which they conceive to be afforded from the Bible.

It is therefore not in the least surprising that "PARADISE LOST" should be deemed by Trinitarians a powerful auxiliary to their cause. Indeed I find the theology (pardon the misnomer) of Milton is highly admired by Trinitarians, and it is quite fashionable amongst them to quote passages from this Poem to establish or at least to strengthen the positions of their unintelligible system. Now, highly as I admire "Paradise Lost" as a master piece of poetic excellence, and greatly as I feel myself delighted with the sublimity of its style, the sweetness of its numbers, and the inimitable grandeur of its imagery, yet I do not conceive myself bound to receive its fanciful representations as infallible truths. In fact it is extremely difficult to believe that Milton was any nearer giving credence to his tales about the broils in heaven, than were Homer and Virgil in crediting the absurd stories of mythology which formed the basis of their Poems.

The truth is, that the story of the "Paradise Lost" does not hang together sufficiently well to be taken for a statement of facts, and this I have sometimes endeavored to represent to Trinitarians whom I have chanced to hear appealing to

Milton in proof of their doctrines. That your readers may judge how far I am correct in this opinion I will here put down Milton's account of the *cause* of the war, and his view of the person of Christ whom he introduces to our notice in the following manner :—

“ the Father Infinite,
By whom in bliss imbosomed, sat the Son
Amidst, as from a flaming mount, whose top
Brightness had made invisible, thus spake :
Hear, all ye angels, progeny of light,
Thrones, dominations, principedoms, virtues, powers ;
Hear my decree, which unrevok'd shall stand.
THIS DAY I have begot whom I declare
My only Son, and on this holy hill
Him have anointed, whom ye now behold
At my right hand ; your head I him appoint ;
And by myself have sworn to him shall bow
All knees in heaven, and shall confess him Lord.”

Here it is distinctly stated that at a certain time (and we shall presently see precisely when) the Son was appointed head over all, vicegerent of heaven. Consequently he did not possess this power from eternity.

With this appointment we are told

“ All seem'd well pleased ; all seem'd, but were not all ;”

for Satan “ fraught with envy against the Son of God,” “ could not bear through pride that sight,” and addressing his companion, says,

“ new laws thou seest impos'd ;
New laws from Him who reigns, new minds may raise
In us who serve, new councils to debate :”

and to carry into effect his hostile intentions, Satan attempts to sow the seeds of jealousy in the minds of the angelic host,

“ And with lies
Drew after him the third part of heaven's host,”

who along with himself were determined to resist the imposition of a new king whom they had never before known. The

Almighty Father who saw the "rebellion rising," consults the Son as to the means of quelling it.

"Son, thou in whom my glory I behold
In full resplendence, heir of all my might,
Nearly it now concerns us to be sure
Of our omnipotence, and with what arms
We mean to hold what anciently we claim
Of Deity or empire: such a foe
Is rising, who intends to erect his throne
Equal to ours, throughout the spacious north;
Nor so content, hath in his thought to try
In battle, what our power is, or our right.
Let us advise, and to this hazard draw
With speed what force is left, and all employ
In our defence; lest unawares we lose
This our high place, our sanctuary, our hill."

To say nothing about the revolting absurdity of making the Eternal talk of "ancient claims," and of devising means to make sure "of Deity and empire," there is, one should think, in the preceding quotations absurdity and contradiction enough of all conscience to satisfy even the admirers (and such there are) of contradiction and absurdity. In the first quotation, the Son is said to be just begotten and constituted head of the heavenly hierarchies. In the other he is represented as having held with the Father "Deity and empire" from "ancient" times; and at the same time the appointment of this newly begotten Son to the vicegerency of heaven is actually assigned as the very cause of the rebellion and subsequent war in heaven. What a pity it is Milton did not bethink him of the very convenient (at least in those cases) phrase "begotten from all eternity;" and accompany the use of it with a tale about the rebellious angels attempting to shake off the Son's authority and rule, instead of that which he has told. But unhappily for the hypothesis that the Son is co-eternal, Milton has as carefully noted down the period when he was begotten or brought into existence, as the birth of a child is recorded on the blank leaves of a family Bible. The very next day to that on which the Son was brought into being, the war to which his exaltation gave rise, begins. This war lasts *three days*, on

the last of which the Son single handed expels the rebellious hosts from heaven. "Nine days they fell," and "nine times the space that measures day and night to mortal man," they lay senseless in the fiery lake. Satan then arouses his companions and incites them to try some new enterprise. After a few days spent in building Pandemonium and holding a consultation, it is determined that Satan shall go in search of this world, then newly created, which journey he undertakes and completes. According to this account the world must have been created immediately upon the expulsion of Satan and his associates from heaven, say, at the very time that the fallen host were consulting about the means they should adopt, for so according to the account it must have been. Thus we have nine days on the lake, and nine taken up in the fall from heaven, and three occupied in the fighting, that is, twenty one days from the commencement of the rebellion in heaven, to the arousing of the fallen host by Satan. If this be, as it is represented, the period of the creation, then the Son, as Milton terms him, or the second person in the trinity as Trinitarians call him, was in reality brought into existence only *twenty-one days* before the creation of the world. Where then or what was he *twenty-two* days before the creation? What becomes of the *eternal* existence of the Son? Really such monstrous representations are shocking. In Milton however we might readily enough excuse such nonsense, on the score, that poets have a licence to say whatever suits their subject; and the more so when we recollect that a first rate poet has declared that a bard can sing fiction better than fact. But what can we think of grave prose writers and solemn prose speakers who dwell upon such a subject and represent it to their deluded readers and hearers as the truth of God?

Perhaps these few cursory remarks may induce some of your correspondents to turn their attention to the subject of "Paradise Lost," and then we may be amused and instructed by observations on some other equally curious parts of that work.

H. CLARKE.

December, 1823.

ON CONTENTMENT.

To the Editors of the Christian Reflector.

GENTLEMEN,

It is a circumstance which appears to me greatly to detract from the well meant exertions of the divine or the moralist, that they often descant on Utopian theories, and recommend systems to the notice of mankind, which it would be impracticable to observe, without a complete re-organization of the human mind; and which if it were possible for them to be strictly obeyed, would completely subvert, not only the customs and observances of society, but overturn the basis on which it is founded, and which in fact would be more applicable, to man were he the imaginary creature, pictured by their fancy, rather than the sober reality which he is found to be in the occurrences of life. Thus without impugning the motives of those who have recommended, urged and pleaded, the general acquisition of what is called contentment: who have pressed into their service, the lofty strains of poetry and the commanding fire of eloquence, with all these numerous auxiliaries which prepossess the heart, and almost incapacitate it for the exercise of cool deliberate judgment, I think that the general exercise of this (I had almost said virtue) quality would prove the bane, rather than the blessing of society.

This may appear to some a most unqualified assertion, while others may imagine that such an assumption is unequivocally contradicted in the volume of the scriptures, and hence it may perhaps be necessary to explain what I mean by the term. I understand by contentment that peculiar frame of mind, which has no wish, no desire ungratified; which is perfectly and completely satisfied with its situation, having nothing to perform, nothing to alter or amend, but prefers that state of things which it possesses to that of every other which can be imagined.

It is however often easier to dwell upon the negative; to describe what a term does not mean than the contrary. When therefore I find Paul asserting that he had learned in whatsoever state he was placed therewith to be content,—I understand him to imply, not that he had resigned himself to listlessness and inactivity, not that he became indifferent to the events which were taking place around him; not that he at once renounced all enterprise and exertion, and contemplated his future life, as that of a passive being, floating like a log upon the waters, determined in its course by adventitious causes, and after obeying the impulses of every varying wind, it is at length drifted to its final haven; but I consider his meaning to be an

utter contempt of the riches, the honors, and the gratifications of this world. He viewed the great work of his apostleship as the end and object of his exertions, and he maintained a beautiful equanimity of mind, he learned to be perfectly content in his apparently humble situation, when the gaudy trappings of wealth, and the pompous decorations of worldly honor and authority presented themselves to his notice. The precepts of the sacred writers on this subject, are all deduced from contrasted examples of poverty and affluence, and were not directed to any other view of man's situation in the world. Thus James tells us to be content with such things as we have, and although Paul in his first epistle to Timothy, acquaints him that godliness with contentment is great gain, yet immediately after he affixes a definite meaning to the term, and no one can mistake the sense in which he uses it. He advises his young coadjutor in these words, "having food and raiment let us be therewith content, but they that will be rich fall into temptations," and subsequently and almost immediately adds, "the love of money is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, &c." So that the apostle's advice must be regarded as referring to the acquisition of wealth, or probably as a caution against avarice, and too great a craving for worldly affluence to the neglect of those infinitely more important objects, he was called upon to accomplish.

There are two points of view in which this subject may be considered, *generally*, as regards the effects which would result to society at large; and *particularly*, in the influence it would have upon the conduct and situation of men individually.

All who have taken the least notice of the general, and universal pursuits of mankind, are aware, that happiness presents too imposing a figure to be easily overlooked. She is the grand ultimatum, the fondest object to which man directs his enterprises. She is sought for by all, but is very rarely obtained by any. Indeed perfect unalloyed happiness is never enjoyed by man; it would be inconsistent with the design for which he was placed in the world, by his Creator. For without trials, temptations and difficulties, to resist and overcome, man would not be virtuous; if not virtuous he could not enjoy that superior felicity which another state of existence will open to his view, and for the possession of which he ought to prepare himself in this. But would the acquisition of that degree of happiness which we are capable of obtaining be expedited by the prevalence of universal content? Although happiness and content are generally considered as synonymous, I am disposed to take the negative side of the question. I recollect indeed, that when Socrates was asked what person he accounted to approach nearest to the Gods in happiness, he replied "he

that is in want of, or he that is content with the fewest things." This I readily allow to be true, as regards personal wants, for well regulated desires, and a simplicity of life which is satisfied with the plainest food, and most humble accommodation, may be pronounced happy when compared with the man, who wallowing in wealth, possesses a craving disposition, continually desiring more, but this merely proves what no one will I think deny, that happiness consists in a comparison of sensations. Content on the other hand is a complete absence of all comparison; it is wrapped up in the contemplation of itself. If we apply this to the mental faculties, from whence after all, real happiness must spring, we shall find the conclusion will not hold good. Socrates himself, whose termagant wife, afforded him many opportunities of displaying the placidity of his temper, does not appear to have been perfectly contented with the state of things which he witnessed; else why have run the risk of exasperating the public by his frequent lectures and admonitions? Why so diligently employ himself in the instruction of youth, and endeavor to disseminate more sublime principles of theology, than the people were prepared to receive? Was it not because he was discontented with the ignorance and superstition which pervaded every rank of society, and endeavored to meliorate their condition by improving their minds? Whereas if he had converted a tub into his habitation and like Diogenes, though without his snarling, had possessed so few wants as to require nothing more than the cheering warmth of sun-shine; allowing things around him to take their several courses, from the impulses of chance or fatality, or by whatever other name you may choose that events shall be governed and directed, he would then have exhibited a perfect model of contentment and been in course, a most happy man.

The natural result of contentment is inactivity, and inactivity is I think invariably the foe to happiness. Had the worthies of mankind been contented with their lot, and those of their fellow creatures, it would have been sufficient for them and for others to gorge themselves like the Hottentot with food, and then solace themselves two or three days with one uninterrupted slumber, in order to overcome the disagreeable effects of their intemperate surfeit. Why must a Locke, have intensely analyzed the operations of mind? Why a Newton have investigated the motions of the heavenly bodies; and demonstrated the existence and activity of the laws by which they are governed? Why must a Franklin meddle with the elements of Jove's dread lightning? or a Priestley, a Davy, a Berthollet, or a Lavoisier, enter into the minute combination, by which all the variety of the globe is formed from a few simple substances? What praise is due to the inventors of the

telescope, the microscope, the air pump, or the electrical machine? what thanks for the complicated machinery of the steam engine, or for those simpler powers, the lever, the wedge or the screw; in short of all discoveries, and improvements whatsoever and wheresoever? For if mankind had all been absolutely contented with their situation, these inventions would not have taken place, or if they had would have been totally disregarded; as no motive could possibly exist, capable of promoting a change from such a state, mankind would for ever have continued in the blessedness of blind, undoubting, contented ignorance.

Universal contentment would have been an insuperable obstacle to the appearance of those bright spirits, who from time to time have gladdened the hearts of man. The worthies of the human race!—no such name would be discoverable in language. The Sage, whose prudent admonitions had enlightened the mind; the Philosopher whose knowledge afforded the most beneficial effects in the melioration of the personal state of his countrymen; these would never have arisen in ages of universal content. The Patriot, whose stern unbending presence, sought the palaces of tyranny to advocate the cause of liberty, and contemplated his life a cheap sacrifice for his country's good; or the Philanthropist delighting in deeds of secret kindness, whose daily and hourly avocation was to destroy misery and distress—to relieve the wants and pour the balm of consolation into the wounded spirit of the wretched sufferer, these are characters which would be unknown in a period of universal contentment.

If this disposition of the mind produces happiness, the life of the Hottentot must be considered as the *summum bonum* of human felicity and those who are now supposed to be benefactors of their species ought to be regarded as our worst enemies, because of the wants and desires which they have introduced. Leading the mind from one field of view to another still more extended, that *ignis fatuus* improvement (i. e. increased wants) seems to prescribe to itself no bounds, and although we continually press on to reach the mark, it recedes in the same or with a greater velocity than that with which we advance.

If contentment had universally obtained amongst men in the earlier ages of the world, the consequences would have been dreadful by destroying every probability of improvement. In whatever situation the human race might happen to be placed when such a doctrine became prevalent, there they would have for ever remained, at least as long as they were contented with their situation. Could we suppose a society to exist, in the infancy of the arts and sciences, perfectly satisfied with what they possessed, having no desires, no cravings, no wishes to

break the even tenor of their way, what a subject would they afford for contemplation. Wanting motives to stimulate them to exertion, and it ought to be remarked that neither the stimulus, or its corresponding action could take place, till content was banished, they would appear in the possession of god-like powers, which like the talent in the parable, would be buried in the earth. Stationary it is probable they would not long remain, and the catastrophe would be one not to be viewed without commiseration and pity, as ending in degradation, barbarism and impenetrable ignorance.

If in the present comparatively enlightened era, content were by some supernatural influence universally to prevail, what might we conjecture of our situation.

The Tyrant who transgressed all laws, human and divine, whose sacrilegious acts would fill with horror a humane heart, who trampled upon all the feelings of our nature—who gave unbounded sway to the most vindictive passions would study merely how to gratify his lust, and pamper his unruly desires, whilst ourselves like servile slaves whose highest honor would be in humble prostration to kiss his feet,—would yet behold these things with apathy, for we should be content.

The fiend-like monster, Superstition, might stalk abroad unmolested,—promulgate her decrees; produce her puerile forms, and unmeaning ceremonies: and select victims to be sacrificed for the honor of her God, whilst Fanaticism, would build the altar, and Bigotry become the willing executioner. We should look on with indifference, we should be content.

Priestcraft might rear her detested head, deck out her creatures in peculiar garbs, and call them by sacred names, constitute establishments of error and imposture, fortify them with mystery, cover them with the splendid decorations of worldly grandeur, place in them an idol to be worshipped as the God of heaven and promulgate through her instruments the rulers of the world, that she arrogates the power and office of law-giver to the church of God, and would anathematize those, who refused to own the authority. All this we should allow to pass unheeded. We should be content.

But I have no occasion to trace any farther an illustration which may be carried to far greater lengths, to every relation of a public nature. Let it however never be forgotten that civil and religious liberty is incompatible with a contented situation, it will never be preserved in such a situation; it must be carefully and diligently watched, nor are those heavenly blessings, ever in a state of complete security, unless when Jealousy is appointed their guardian.

Let us now contemplate for a few moments the effects which would be individually perceived from the prevalence of contentment.

Possessed of power by the beneficence of the Almighty which

raises man far superior, to the rest of the animal creation he will have no inclination to use these his glorious privileges. Contented with his lot, every stimulus is taken from him which would prompt him to try his powers. A contented man cannot be spurred to deeds of fame by emulation, because emulation presupposes a desire to perform something yet unaccomplished. His bosom can never be visited by hope, for that would imply that he might be placed in a situation in which he would become possessed of an object he was then wishing for. The means of instruction would be withheld from the rising generation in a contented state, it would be considered needless to attempt the improvement of the succeeding race; and those who were entering into life, being content, would not have the least idea of escaping that state of ignorance to which they were doomed. Follow this train of ideas, and the mind will sicken at the prospect. A perfectly contented man would present to our notice a most deplorable subject for consideration. Enervated by sloth and inactivity, he would become incapable of the exercise of his powers—probably unconscious that he possessed any. In a state of mental degradation, from which he could never recover himself, he would behold every varying event, with that apathy and listlessness which pervades a drivelling idiot.

No curiosity—no enterprise—no anxiety—no hope; we limit his circle of happiness to a comparative point, and all his means of enjoyment seems to consist rather in the absence of painful emotion, than of consciousness and perception of pleasurable feelings.

Nor would he ever become a religious character. This boasted and bepraised contentment, would effectually destroy inquiry and individual judgment. Born an Idolater, a Jew, or a Mahometan, so he would remain. Were his parents Catholics, Episcopalians, Methodists or Swedenborgians, so he would continue. Being contented he would swallow with undoubting belief, the *ipse dixit* of his priest; put his trust in most overwhelming mysteries; receive implicitly glaring contradictions; and pinning his faith, upon the sleeve of his spiritual guide, become an infatuated and priestridden dupe. What now originates from prejudice and superstition would then universally prevail from one general cause, contentment.

But what a situation, when we view him as an heir of immortality. He may indeed be fitted for the enjoyment of a Mahometan paradise, and revel in sensual delights—but a spiritual heaven, would afford no happiness to him, until his soul had suffered a long purgation.

Man is not born to be content; it is not the end and object for which he was placed here, but directly opposed to them; it is contrary to the fundamental principles of his nature. Limited and bounded indeed are his faculties, for every thing

finite and created must necessarily be so. But what mortal can affix those bounds? Who can say to the mind, hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther? I must leave to some one more competent than myself, the occupation of delineating the gradual development of the powers of the human mind. To use a common but beautiful simile; a pebble thrown into the centre of the peaceful lake, produces circles upon its glassy surface, which continually increase in size, till at length their circumference extends from shore to shore. So it is with the mind, with the powers of man, from the creation of the world, to the present time; and it will go on, enlarging its boundaries and taking more extended excursions:

“For from the birth
Of mortal man, the Sovereign Maker said,
That not in humble, nor in brief delight,
Not in the fading echoes of renown,
Power's purple robe, nor pleasures flow'ry lap,
The soul should find enjoyment; but from these
Turning disdainful to an equal good,
Through all th' ascent of things enlarge her view,
Till every bound at length should disappear,
And infinite perfection close the scene.”

We are constituted by our Omniscient Creator restless and uneasy. The more we know, the more we wish to know, and of learning and knowledge, it may be truly said in reference to a continually increasing desire for improvement;

“They spring eternal in the human breast,
Man never is, but always to be blest.”

Improving continually in this state of existence, we close this earthly pilgrimage, by passing through the dark valley of the shadow of death; and again restored to consciousness, we shall find ourselves in possession of superior powers, and continually aspiring to superior states of existence; and ascending in the ranks of creation we shall approach nearer and more near, to a resemblance of that Being who is infinite perfection.

A LOVER OF TRUTH.

The Caterer,

No. XV.

“Plinius major dicere solebat, nullum esse librum tam malum, ut non aliquâ parte posset prodesse.”

The Advantages of a Classical Education to the Theologian.

“TURN yourself to the study of the *heathen* historians, poets,

orators, and philosophers. Spend ten or twelve years upon *Horace* or *Terence*. To illustrate a *billet-doux* or a *drunken catch*, — — will do you more credit, and be of greater service to you than the most useful employment of your time upon the *scriptures*; unless you can resolve to *conceal your sentiments*, and speak always with the vulgar: you see a present example in the great *Bentley*: what a reputation he has acquired by the noble edition he has given us of *Horace*! How are his abilities confessed and admired by all! But had the same genius, the same sagacity and labor, been applied to the study of the *scriptures*; to settle the text in doubtful places, to mend corrupted ones, explain hard ones, fix the meaning of obscure ones, and to trace out the literal sense where it can be done; should he, I say, have attempted a work of this kind; instead of thanks and applause, it is more than probable he would have been treated as a rash man, of no judgment, of little learning, and less religion."

Bp. Hurd's Letter. See Pillars of Priestcraft. iv. 49.

The Price of Education.

"WHEN a certain person proposed to place his son under the care of Aristippus, Aristippus asked him five hundred drachmas; I can buy, said the other, a slave for that sum: do, said Aristippus, and then you will have two. See also *Aulus Gellius xv. 19.*"

"It is pitie, that commonlie more care is had, yea, and that amonges verie wise men, to find out rather a cunnyng man for their horse, than a cunnyng man for their children. They say nay in worde, but they do so in deede. For to the one they will gladly give a stipend of 200 crounes by yeare, and loth to offer to the other 200 shillings.* God that sitteth in heaven laugheth their choice to skorne, and rewardeth their liberalitie as it should, for he suffereth them to have tame and well ordered horses, but wilde and unfortunate children; and therefore in the ende they finde more pleasure in their horse, than comforte in their children."

ASCHAM'S "Schoolmaster," Works, 4to. p. 212.

Quoted in Memoirs of Wakefield.

Brazen Nose College.

THE following circumstance is related by Gilbert Wakefield, in *The Memoirs of his Life*, written by himself.

"The mention of *Brazen Nose College* excites in my mind the recollection of a pleasant adventure that happened during my residence in *Liverpool*. A large company was dining at the

* See *Juvenal*, VII. 186.

Golden Lion, one of which was a *Welch curate*, with a very insignificant appearance, meanly dressed, and of a small meagre person. Near him sat a *wag* of a *gigantic* size, and thundering accent, remarkable for an enormous nose on his impudent face. The little parson was immediately fixed upon as a good subject for the raillery of this important gentleman; who set himself accordingly to *roast the doctor* for the entertainment of the guests. "I presume, doctor? you have had a *college education*?" "Yes, Sir!" "You look as if you had." "You too, Sir! no doubt have enjoyed the advantages of academical instruction." "Certainly, Sir! I have." "You are a member, I make no question, of *Brazen Nose College*." "You scoundrel! what do you mean by that?"—The disputants came to blows; and our *ecclesiastic pugilist*, to the amazement of the spectators, proved such a *David* to this *Goliath*, as made him speedily repent of his temerity and importance in provoking one, who *could thump a cushion*, or *pummel an antagonist*, with equal vigour and dexterity."

Despotism.

SAVARY, on approaching Egypt, beholding the fertility of the country and the slavery of its inhabitants, says: Despotism with its iron sceptre ruins the finest country in the world. It appears that the miseries of mankind increase in proportion to the efforts of nature to render them happy.

Religious Intelligence.

ON Monday, January 12th, 1824, the Unitarian christians of Hindley, Wigan, and Park Lane, held a public dinner at the Bear's Paw, Wigan. Forty-seven persons, male and female, were present, the Rev. George Harris in the chair, and the Rev. J. Ragland, vice president. The meeting was addressed by the Revds. George Harris, J. Ragland, and F. Knowles; and by Messrs. F. Boardman, W. Duffield, and F. Duffield, of Manchester; D. Shaw, of Park Lane; J. Peak, of Chowbent; and G. Fletcher, of Wigan. In the evening Mr. Harris preached on the doctrine of Universal Restoration. Several ministers were invited to attend the meeting, but did not comply with the request.

The Rev. George Harris is delivering on Sunday evenings, in the Unitarian Meeting House, Moor Lane, Bolton, a Course of seven Lectures, on the Constitution and Doctrines of the Church of England.

The Rev. Franklin Baker who has lately finished his studies in the University of Glasgow, has entered upon the office of Pastor to the Unitarian Congregation assembling in Bank Street Chapel, Bolton.

The Rev. W. Stevens commenced a Course of Lectures, in the Unitarian Meeting-house, Great Cross Hall Street, Liverpool, on Sunday Evening, January 25th. The following are the subjects.

Mystery, Revelation and Reason.—The Divine Justice considered with reference to the Calvinistic Scheme.—The Impersonality of the Holy Spirit. (*This by F. B. Wright.*) Superiority of Unitarianism asserted.—The Excellency of Christ's Character on Unitarian Principles—Glorying in the Cross of Christ.—Religious Feeling.—The Sufficiency of the Scriptures as a Guide to Truth.—The Inspiration of the Scriptures.

Original Poetry.

LINES

ON LEAVING A FRIEND'S HOUSE, JULY 30th, 1823.

SWEET spot! in thee how oft my weary feet
Would seek repose, where grace and virtue meet,
And love and smiling joy, when thou wilt seem
But as the soft remembrance of a dream.
Bright, beautiful, beatific; it is past,
And I must turn to other scenes at last!

The purest wish a young heart sends to heav'n
Rest upon thee! for, oh! this bliss is giv'n
To the young heart, to feel the kindling glow
Of joy and rapture, and the life's blood flow
Through ev'ry vein, hast'ning the soul along.
Awake to all the melody of song,
Whene'er it meets with kindred spirits, form'd
In nature's finest mould, and gently warm'd
By nature's holiest fire, to grace and bless
Life's rugged path with thoughts of loveliness.

Yes; may a thousand thousand gifts be thine,
And this a pure, a sacred joy be mine,
When scenes less lovely, friends less kind arise,
To breathe one prayer for thee to yonder skies,
For mem'ry never, never can forget
The friends on whom my thoughts would fondly linger yet.

ICHNEUTES.

Selected Poetry.

THE AUTUMN EVENING.

BEHOLD the western evening light !
 It melts in evening gloom,
 So calmly christians sink away,
 Descending to the tomb.

The winds breathe low—the with'ring leaf
 Scarce whispers from the tree !
 So gently flows the parting breath,
 When good men cease to be.

How beautiful on all the hills
 The crimson light is shed !
 'Tis like the peace the christian gives
 To mourners round his bed.

How mildly on the wand'ring cloud
 The sunset beam is cast !
 'Tis like the memory left behind
 When lov'd ones breathe their last.

And now above the dews of night
 The yellow star appears !
 So faith springs in the hearts of those
 Whose eyes are bath'd in tears.

But soon the morning's happier light
 Its glory shall restore ;
 And eyelids that are seal'd in death
 Shall wake to close no more.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The remarks on Sunday School Books have been unfortunately mislaid.
K. is received. *G. W. V.* came too late for the present Number.
 Our arrangements are made by the 15th, and we shall esteem it a favor
 if our Correspondents will recollect this. The department for *Intelli-*
gence is open till the 22nd, *Advertisements* for the Cover till the 24th.
 We shall be glad to hear from our friend *C.*
Zeno is postponed for want of room.
Inquirer will find an answer to his note in the advertisement on the
 cover of the present Number.

F. B. Wright, Printer, Liverpool.

The Christian Reflector, AND THEOLOGICAL INQUIRER.

"I speak as unto wise men ; judge ye what I say." PAUL.

No. 55. LIVERPOOL, MARCH 1st, 1824. Price 4½d

BIBLICAL CRITICISM.

The following selections from a valuable old book, intituled "Moses and Aaron," it is hoped will throw some light upon passages that are difficult to common readers.

I CORINTHIANS, XV. 32.

If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus.

THOSE who were condemned to wild beasts, are properly termed *Bestiarii*. Whether Saint Paul did, according to the letter, fight with beasts at Ephesus, is much controverted. Some understand by beasts, Demetrius, and others that opposed him at Ephesus : others more probably understand the words literally ; and this kind of punishment was commonly exercised against christians in the primitive church, insomuch that heathens imputing the cause of all public calamities unto the christians, would call out, *Christianos ad leones*, let the christians be haled to lions : yea the literal interpretation of the words is a stronger argument that St. Paul believed the resurrection (which is the scope of the text) than to understand the words of a metaphorical fight against the enemies of his doctrine.

PROVERBS, XX. 26.

A wise king scattereth the wicked and bringeth the wheel over them.

I take the words to imply no more but this, that as the wheel turneth round, so by the wisdom of a king the mischief intended by wicked men, is brought upon their own head. That hereby should be understood the grinding of wicked men under a cart wheel, as the husbandman brake some sort of grain under a wheel, is the meer conceit of expositors on this place : for

no records make mention of any such punishment in use among the Jews. Among the Greeks there was a punishment went under this name : it was called a wheel, not because a wheel was brought over the wicked, but because they bound fast the offender to the spokes of a wheel, and there scourged him, to enforce a confession.

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY DEFENDED, AND PRIEST-CRAFT EXPLODED.

(Continued from page 33.)

Sect. 2. That christian Ministers are not a new order of priests, nor invested with prerogatives and powers as a privileged order in distinction from their brethren.

Before I go into an examination of the unscriptural claims, and usurped prerogatives and powers, of what has been called the christian priesthood, and attempt to lay open the artifices and vile practices of priestcraft, it will be proper to give a brief statement of the nature of the christian ministry, its importance and usefulness ; and to point out distinctly, the real powers and just claims of christian ministers. This is necessary to guard my remarks on priests and priestcraft from misconstruction and misapplication ; and to assist the reader to distinguish the faithful servants of the Lord, whose object is to enlighten and improve mankind, who seek not their own honor, ease and gratification, but the glory of God and the salvation of men, from those who, under the influence of worldly motives and in a worldly spirit, prostitute the christian ministry to base and selfish purposes. The distinguishing between characters so essentially different, is absolutely necessary, to save the christian ministry from reproach and obloquy, and to secure to the ministration of the word of life that attention and regard which is necessary to its progress and success in the world.

1. Not only heathenism, but judaism also had its priesthood. In the nation of Israel one tribe was separated from their brethren, and in that tribe one family was peculiarly distin-

guished, to be devoted to the service of the altar; they were God's peculiar portion under the theocracy, and were excluded from their share in the land of Canaan, when divided among the tribes, that they might be entirely devoted to the service of the tabernacle: hence they were to live on the tithes and offerings of the people. Such an institution was suited to a theocratical government, and the worldly sanctuary established under it, but is not required by, nor at all suited to, the spiritual kingdom of Christ, the gospel dispensation. Jesus the Lord and lawgiver of christians, established no Levitical order, ordained no priesthood in his church. Neither the name nor the thing can be traced in the New Testament, otherwise than as all christians are, figuratively, called priests, because they have all alike access to God. Those who contend for a christian priesthood ought to show that Jesus Christ instituted it, or that the christian religion requires its existence; but that they can do either of these is impossible. We have a plain and full account of the institution of the Jewish priesthood in the law of Moses; and had Christ instituted a similar order, as full and plain an account of his doing it ought to be found in the gospel; instead of which we find not one word there on the subject, which proves that he did no such thing. The apostles, evangelists, and other primitive ministers of the word, and officers of the christian church, are never called priests; this, and the whole of their conduct, prove they were not priests. There is nothing in the nature of christianity, or any of its institutes, or in the ministration of the gospel, which requires the existence of a priesthood, nothing which a man may not do without being a priest, or setting up any claim to that title and office; on the contrary, the existence of a priesthood is incompatible with the perfect brotherhood, religious equality, liberty and privileges which are common to all christians, as well as with the exclusive mastership and prerogatives of Jesus Christ, and the spirituality and simplicity of the gospel dispensation. It is impossible the real ministers of Christ should call or think themselves priests. They will not pretend to be in the christian church, what the tribe of Levi and the

sons of Aaron were in the Jewish church. They know that the New Testament says nothing about holy buildings, or altars, as essential to the acceptable service of God; that the theocratical government hath ceased, and its ministers are dismissed; that the worldly sanctuary is pulled down, and no such service remains to be performed as the priests of old performed. They know that all their fellow christians are allowed equal access to God with themselves, and are called to enjoy the same blessings and privileges, to exercise the same rights and liberties; and it is their aim to lead them to the knowledge and enjoyment of all the blessings and privileges of the gospel, and to excite them to the exercise of the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free.

2. In the New Testament, no honorary titles are given, either to the extraordinary, or the ordinary ministers of Jesus Christ; all the names given to them as ministers are official, and expressive of the particular work to which they were called: no terms of distinction are applied to them, which denote their being a privileged order, invested with rights and prerogatives which belonged not to christians at large: nor was there any thing in the offices they filled, which so separated them from their brethren as to constitute them a distinct order, like the Jewish priesthood. If any persons, in the primitive church, might be regarded as a distinct privileged order, and as possessing superior rights and prerogatives to all others, it must be the Apostles, who were divinely commissioned, endowed with supernatural powers, and who, under Christ, were the founders of the christian religion; but their most distinguishing title, that of Apostles of Christ, merely expressed that they were sent by him, were his messengers to mankind; nor did they, even on the ground of their divine mission and supernatural powers, claim any dominion over their fellow christians, or over their faith, but disavowed it: their language was, "Not as Lords over God's heritage;"—"Not as lords over your faith;" and the whole of their conduct accorded with such declarations. They claimed no blessings, or privileges, or rights, or liberties for themselves, which they did not concede, and speak of as

belonging equally to all their fellow christians. They throughout acted as brethren and fellow servants, among those whom they brought to receive the gospel and live in obedience to Jesus their common Lord. They sought no distinction but what their gifts, virtues, labors, and sufferings, in the cause of truth and righteousness, and for the edification of the church, conferred upon them. Had the apostles claimed peculiar rights and prerogatives, as a distinct privileged order among christians, this could have been no precedent to ministers in the present day, as their mission, extraordinary powers, office and work were all peculiar, and continued not beyond their own times; but as the Apostles made no such claims, there can be no shadow of authority for any persons in the present day to set themselves up as a distinct and privileged order in the church, the doing so must be both absurd and presumptuous. The ordinary ministers among the primitive christians had no names or titles, but what expressed simply their several offices and the work to which they were called; and they claimed no distinctive rights nor privileges; but were content to live and act as brethren among their brethren, and servants among their fellow servants. Nothing attached to them which marked them out as belonging to a distinct and privileged order in the church. Elders were persons chosen by the churches from among themselves, to preside in their meetings, and preserve peace and order in their assemblies. These were called bishops and pastors, because, as the words import, they were overseers of the flock of God, and were called to feed them with the word of life. Deacons and ministers were so called, because, as the names express, they were servants of the church, and ministered or served either in spiritual or temporal things, for the comfort and edification of their brethren. As they had no titles of distinction, so neither had they, nor claimed they, any power, but what the exercise of their talents and offices involved; that of ministering to the temporal or spiritual wants of others, of promoting their good and edification. While things continued in this state, a distinct privileged order among christians could have no existence; the brotherhood, liberty

and religious equality which prevailed among them, and offices existing solely for mutual edification, would preclude the possibility of it.

3. The apostolic ministry was instituted by Jesus Christ, and, in the execution of it, the Apostles had divine aid, and, as occasion required, were under an immediate divine influence and direction; but we have no authority from the New Testament to say the same things of the christian ministry since the times of the Apostles. The Evangelists were persons employed in connection with the apostles, and as their auxiliaries in spreading the glad tidings of salvation and everlasting life among men: yet even then it appears not to have been improper for others to preach the gospel, so far as they understood it, who had no authority from the apostles to do so, nor any connection with them, and who had received no commission to do it; as was the case with Apollos and others. When churches were planted, the apostles appointed officers among them, called elders, and sometimes bishops and deacons, and made such other regulations, as the situation and edification of the people, the circumstances of the times, and the promotion of the christian cause, seemed to them to require. Some of the regulations which they adopted seem to have been suggested by the wants of the church, and the state of things at the time; as the appointment of the seven deacons in the church at Jerusalem, and the letter to the Gentile churches, agreed on, after much disputing, by the apostles, elders and brethren at Jerusalem. It does not appear that any precise form of church order, government and discipline was given by Jesus Christ; for we find no precise form laid down in the New Testament; but the great principles which he taught, and the maxims he inculcated, are a sufficient foundation for christians to build upon, and rule for them to proceed by, in all ages, if they be careful to do every thing in his spirit, and never to depart from his precepts. The wants of mankind, and the edification of the church, rendered the ordinary christian ministry essentially necessary at first, and its evident utility would lead to its continuance. So long as the wants of men render religious and moral instruction neces-

sary ; so long as the public ministration of the gospel is calculated for the good and salvation of the world, and to promote the comfort and spiritual edification of those who believe ; and so long as the solemn worship of Almighty God, conducted in an acceptable manner, is felt by christians to be an invaluable blessing, the christian ministry must be necessary, and will be encouraged and supported by all serious, candid, pious and benevolent persons. On this ground, viz. to suitableness to the moral and spiritual wants of mankind, its tendency to promote the knowledge, virtue, piety and happiness of those who enjoy it, and the little probability of preserving, much less of promoting and diffusing pure and undefiled religion in the world without it, we may rest the weight of the question respecting the importance and value of the christian ministry ; without seeking for what we are not likely to find, the proof of its being an immediate divine institution. It is enough that it naturally emanated from christianity in its first best days, grew up under the patronage of the apostles, and, notwithstanding its gross corruption, perversion and abuse, has done much towards enlightening and regenerating the world. While we set our faces against its abuses and corruptions, and protest against priests and priestcraft, let us cherish the christian ministry wherever we find it existing in simplicity and purity.

4. By the christian ministry, in this Essay, is meant, all such persons as minister the gospel of Christ, by the publicly teaching and preaching of its pure doctrines and holy precepts, or, according to the words of Paul, who labor in the word and doctrine ; as well as those who, being the pastors of particular congregations, not only labor in the public ministration of the word, but also faithfully execute the various parts of the pastoral office. Every congregation has an undoubted right to choose their own minister or ministers, and are accountable to none but God for the choice they make, and for their various religious proceedings. Every minister has a right to teach whatever he thinks christian truth, to enforce whatever he believes to be a christian duty, and to reprove whatever he believes to be sinful ; but he can have no right to exercise the least

control over the faith and consciences of others; nor to make his judgment a rule of either faith or practice to them. As, at their request, he engaged to devote his time and talents to their service and edification, so long as he fulfils this engagement, he has a claim upon them for such a decent and comfortable support and maintenance as they are capable of providing him. Though they have as much right to judge for themselves, and act according to their own judgment as he has, his instructions, admonitions, warnings and exhortations, candidly and faithfully given, have a claim to their serious and candid consideration. Any person who preaches the gospel, without being invited by any congregation to do so, is intitled to be heard with seriousness and candor, by all who choose to hear him.

R. WRIGHT.

(*To be continued.*)

To the Editors of the Christian Reflector.

GENTLEMEN,

I was glad to see that our esteemed friend, Richard Wright, has commenced in your last number, a series of articles on the distinction which should be drawn between the christian ministry and priestcraft. It is a distinction never attended to either by the votaries of fanaticism or the disciples of unbelief, but it is one which every rational man will draw, and will ever be anxious to impress on the minds of his associates. Since I read that article, the following passage has been put into my hands, and as I think it so much in unison with Mr. Wright's remarks, I venture to send it for insertion. It is an extract from a discourse by Mr. Disney, pastor of Headingley, near Leeds. He was a nephew of Dr. Disney, who resigned his living for conscience sake, and the sermons were published by him after the death of his relative.

"The ministerial office was instituted for the following ends; first, to declare the terms of the gospel to the ignorant, and second, to enforce them upon the vicious and inattentive; and our Savior therefore gave them a charge most clear in its commands and comprehensive in its nature, "*Feed my sheep.*"

This surely was a personal charge, their office was to baptize, to administer the Lord's supper, to preside in the religious assemblies, to pray in behalf of the people, to be a constant watch over their manners, to instruct, to rebuke, to exhort, both publicly and from house to house. As long, therefore, as we read the charge of our great Master when he founded his church, "*Feed my sheep,*" so long must we make the guarding and saving of souls the chief end of our taking any parochial cure. The duty of a parish priest is to be a kind father to his whole flock, *to be personally acquainted with them all, to visit them at their houses,* to confer with them upon their spiritual welfare, to put pious treatises into their hands, to lead them to the sacrament early as a part of christian education, to warn the unruly, to confirm the weak; in short, to watch diligently that no soul be lost within the precinct committed to him, through his negligence or inattention."

This is a passage which I think does the author great credit. If it be incumbent on the ministers of an established church thus to act, how much greater cause is there for dissenters and especially Unitarians to embody it in their practice. I would not be censorious, but I apprehend one great reason of the falling away of our religious societies is the inattention of our ministers to the important point of mixing with their people as brothers amongst brethren. Are there not many preachers of the Unitarian sect who are quite unacquainted with their flock, who visit indeed with some two or three families and exhaust all their time and attentions upon them, but who cannot spare a half hour for their poorer brethren, and who thus shew by their actions that "they are not pained for the afflictions of Joseph." I am fearful that this is much too generally the case, and whilst there are those amongst us "who engage in the ministry merely as a genteel profession," this disgrace to our cause will never be wiped away. But woe be to those who are thus at their ease in Zion, who "stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall, that chaunt to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music, that drink wine

in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments." Instead of thus playing the priest may our ministers be indeed workmen who need not to be ashamed; may they remember the preceding denunciations of the prophet of old; and show practically that they recollect the admirable sentiment of James the apostle, "Pure religion and undefiled before God even the Father is this, to visit the *fatherless* and *widows* in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

RESTRICTOR.

LETTER TO THE DEAN OF CARLISLE.

WE have great pleasure in giving insertion to the following Letter which has been printed and circulated at Carlisle. It is the first production of the kind by the youthful author, and does him, we think, great credit. May he persevere in his laudable course, and may the blessing of God attend him.

"A Letter to the very reverend the Dean of Carlisle, in reply to certain misrepresentations of the Unitarians' views of the life and death of our Savior, in a Sermon preached at St. Cuthbert's Church, on the evening of Sunday, Nov. 9th, 1823.

BY AN UNITARIAN.

"Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?

"For we know that as concerning this sect, it is every where spoken against."

Carlisle: Printed for the Author, at G. Irwin's office. 1823.

To the Dean of Carlisle.

VERY REVEREND SIR,

IT is not my intention in this letter to interfere with your sentiments, or to infringe on the principles of the established church. I am a lover of *truth*, wherever it may be found, whether amongst friends or amongst opponents; wherever the flower grows it is divine. I eagerly mingle with people of every religious persuasion, to listen to their arguments, and weigh the evidence brought forward on all sides; and having frequently heard your talents as a minister highly

spoken of, and being informed that you were to deliver a sermon at St. Cuthbert's Church, on Sunday evening, Nov. 9th, I resolved to have the pleasure of hearing and judging for myself. I found, very reverend Sir, that your talents had not been over-rated; but setting them aside, I was astonished to find that a minister of your learning and liberality should be so much mistaken regarding the sentiments of the sect called Unitarians, to which I here conscientiously declare myself to belong. I shall therefore make no apology for thus addressing you, as I flatter myself I have as much right, as an Englishman, to offer a public defence of our tenets, as you had to make a public and I must say groundless attack upon them.

I have already stated that it is not my intention to interfere with your principles of religion. My sole object is the vindication of our sentiments from the misrepresentations which your partial knowledge of them caused you to indulge in; and in this letter I intend to show briefly that our opinions of the life and death of Christ are not as you represented. I will speak plainly and freely too.

If I rightly understood you, you declared your "astonishment that there should exist people, who gave themselves the name of christians and yet could see nothing more in the life of our blessed Lord and Savior than a code of morals the most pure, and an example of piety and virtue well worth our imitation; and that they should see nothing more in his death than an unparalleled magnanimity and fortitude under the most acute and painful suffering." You then declared that the people to whom you alluded were the Unitarians. Were, Sir, our opinions no nobler than those you have saddled us with, I, for my own part should not hesitate to declare my regret and my astonishment at having even risen above the gloomy horrors of Calvinism to embrace such sentiments. But nobler, much nobler, very reverend Sir, are our opinions of our Lord and Master; we believe him to be the Messiah, the Son of God, but we also believe him to be as the scriptures declare him to have been, "Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." (John i. 45) We believe that at his baptism the Spirit was poured on him without measure; that a voice from heaven was heard to proclaim him God's well-beloved Son; that he came in God's almighty name to proclaim peace and salvation to all mankind; to release the prisoners held in the bondage of sin; to clear the mental world of the dark pollutions of vice; to open the eyes of the blind and the ears of the deaf; that he made the dumb to speak and the lame to walk; that he healed the sick, cured the broken hearted and raised the dead; and that he preached the gospel to the poor. We believe that after living a life of the severest trials without repining, he was delivered with the foreknowledge of God, into wicked hands and was crucified and slain. (Acts ii. 23.)

You further, very reverend Sir, said that we saw nothing of the grand scheme of human redemption in the death of Christ. If you meant *that* scheme of redemption which required the blood of Christ to purchase the mercy of God for sinful man, you said right. I trust we have too much respect for the attributes of the Deity; that we stand in too great fear of God's holy name, thus to strip him of his most benign character, and array him in revengeful wrath; and to degrade him below the level of a fellow creature, by depriving him of the power to forgive an injury unless full satisfaction be paid to his justice. Can this be the merciful God whose mercy is from everlasting to everlasting? Can this be the God who is slow to anger, plenteous in mercy? Can this be forgiving to be paid the debt before releasing the debtor? No: the mercy of God requires no such thing as the "merits of his own blood," or at best the blood of one third of himself, to satisfy his justice before he can forgive the sinner. Do the scriptures teach any such doctrine? Let its own language speak. Our Savior says, If ye believe that I am he, ye shall be saved. Repent and believe that thy sins may be forgiven thee. John the Baptist says, Repent ye for the kingdom of heaven is at hand, i. e. the gospel of Christ. The apostle Peter says, Repent ye, therefore, and be converted that your sins may be blotted out. (Acts iii. 19.) Was the language of Paul to the gaoler when he cried, What shall I do to be saved? pleading the merits of the blood of Christ? No, but, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved." (Acts xvi. 31.) I could adduce numberless other passages were it necessary to prove that the scriptures do not teach the doctrine of atonement. The word "atonement" is used only once in the whole New Testament; "For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by his life; and not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." (Rom. v. 10, 11.) Which means not the reconciliation of God to man, but of sinful man to a merciful God. Still, Sir, we rest not our hopes of salvation on our own works; we are too conscious that when we have done all we are unprofitable servants. We come like the poor publican smiting our breasts and crying, "God be merciful to us sinners." We come humbly to the throne of grace, being assured that it is by grace we are saved, and that not of ourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast.—(Eph. ii. 8.) Can it be a gift if purchased? Undoubtedly not. Perhaps you may say that we have it free because Christ has paid for it; then if it has been paid for, how can it be a gift? We behold in the death of Christ that magnanimity which you allowed; but this is not all; we see his resignation to the will

of his heavenly Father, though his mind could scarce sustain the horrors of the scene which he foresaw, when in his agony he prayed that "if possible the cup might pass from him."

"Yet cheer'd the Son of Man arose
And firm and tranquil met his foes."

Though they mocked and spit upon him, though they cruelly and shamefully murdered him, yet with his dying breath he prayed for their forgiveness. We see him bearing the cross, despising the shame, to save a sinful world and seal the "better covenant." We see him sanctioning each gospel truth by his own blood, and thus bringing life and immortality to light, and by his own resurrection giving us assurance of a general resurrection. It is in this sense that Christ came into the world to save sinners, and in this sense it is that we have redemption through his blood. We believe that since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead; thus giving us the victory over death and the grave. We join with the apostle of the gentiles in giving God thanks who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given us assurance in that he hath raised him from the dead; (Acts xvii. 31.) when every man shall be rewarded according to the deeds done in the body whether they be good or bad.

These, very reverend Sir, are the doctrines of Unitarianism, and in my opinion the simple, unadulterated truths of divine revelation. You might flatter yourself that these "pernicious doctrines" had not yet reached this corner of the kingdom, and therefore you would take the opportunity of biassing the minds of your hearers against them. But TRUTH Sir, must triumph; its reign must be extended in spite of the efforts of intolerant men (far be it from me to class you among the number) who are ever pouring the anathemas of bigotry upon its beautiful simplicity; thus rendering the plain truths of divine revelation, nothing more than a heap of unintelligible mysteries. I allow that a man ought to defend his sentiments, yet not at the expence of those of his fellow, who cannot read with the same eye as himself. We think no man the worse for differing with us in opinion. We believe that God is no respecter of persons, but that in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted of him. (Acts x. 34.)

I cannot conclude my letter better than in the words of the amiable and pious Bishop Watson, who says, "If the Trinitarian be in error I doubt not but God will forgive him, as he has fallen into it from the fear of not giving sufficient praise to him whom he thinks worthy of all praise; and if the Unitarian be in error, I doubt not but God will forgive him as he has

fallen into it from fear of becoming an idolater, by giving that praise to another which he conceives to be due to God alone."

The author sent a copy of the preceding pamphlet to the Dean, and intended to have accompanied it by the following letter but was persuaded not to do so. We wish he had followed the bent of his own mind.

"VERY REVEREND SIR,

The enclosed is a copy of what I have now laid before the public with the hope of vindicating our sentiments from the false charges which you as well as many others have been pleased to bring against them. I do not think that had you been acquainted with our sentiments you would have ventured to make such assertions. It is not with the intention of fomenting a controversy or creating an argument that I have thus taken up my pen; far from it. My sole object is to let the public see what are our opinions on the life and death of Christ.—Should I but succeed in convincing one person I shall enjoy the satisfaction of reflecting that I have not labored in vain.

Still Sir, though I resent the accusation which your mistaken knowledge alone could lead you to make, I cannot but admire that spirit of liberality with which you made it. Such a spirit does honor to the christian character. Would to God it were more generally possessed. Then would the church on earth cease to present such scenes as those of men goaded on by the ignoble motives of worldly interest or self conceit, pouring their anathemas against their fellows for entertaining sentiments differing from their own. In my opinion it is one of the wise ordinations of Providence that we should be so diversified. We are all aiming at the same grand object. We have all the same fountain of divine truth to go to, and though some read with one eye and some with another, I doubt not but God will forgive the honest mistakes of the head provided the heart be kept from sin. I am ever open to conviction, and him would I respect as my best friend who from fair scriptural arguments and reason can convince me that I am in error.

The doctrines of Unitarianism are fast gaining ground. The eagle of truth is stretching its pinions and winging its way to the remotest bounds of the earth. Asia has felt their influence, and America has tasted their sweetness. The very place that gave birth to a Calvin has surrendered to their resistless truth. The sun of truth that has long been enveloped beneath the dark and misty clouds of error and superstition, is now sending forth its effulgent rays with more than former brightness; those very men who have long been its bitterest opponents are now becoming its warmest advocates; the days are gone by when men risked their lives by declaring their sentiments, when the excruciating tortures of the rack and other inhuman cruelties (the bare thought of which is enough to freeze the very blood in our veins) that have long disgraced this nation, were made use of to terrify men to conform to establishments. The reign of superstition has received a dreadful shock, and we look forward with joyful anticipation to that not far distant period when it shall come to a final termination, when all the world shall acknowledge Jehovah to be one, and his name one, when nations shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks, when we shall not need to say to each other, know the Lord, but when all shall know him from the lowest to the greatest. Then will the sun of righteousness shine forth with full meridian splendor, then will the fulfilment of every prophecy be at hand. And then cometh the end when Christ shall deliver up the kingdom to him that hath put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

When we come to stand before the judgment seat of Christ to receive the reward of our deeds, that we may be found among the numbers of the blessed, is the sincere and earnest prayer of

Your most humble servant

Carlisle.

THE AUTHOR.

It may perhaps be interesting to our readers to learn that the preceding pamphlet had a rapid sale, but that the Dean has hitherto maintained a dignified silence. Unitarian tracts would be useful at this time in Carlisle, and the labors of a missionary would strengthen the interest which has already been excited. The preceding pamphlet is a proof that the people can, when called on, ably defend the cause of truth, and would those who are called to preside over our congregations really be not merely Unitarians themselves, but the *ministers* of Unitarian christianity to others, our principles would then soon "be justified."—EDITORS

UNITARIANS NOT SOCINIANS.

"He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone." JESUS.

To the Editors of the Christian Reflector,

GENTLEMEN,

Your correspondent "Philalethes" in your last number has penned remarks which call aloud for an explanation on my part, and I doubt not, gentlemen, that you will have the kindness to insert the following observations in your ensuing number:—

In the first place he infers that my remonstrance is perfectly groundless, saying, that on re-perusing his former communication he can discover no illiberal meaning in it;—to prove that it had an illiberal tendency, and that in a very great degree, I need but quote two passages, and this I do merely in justification of what I wrote;—after stating that many Calvinistic ministers apply the epithet "Socinians" to "Unitarians" being at the same time perfectly aware that they are not "Socinians" he continues, I do not believe that Mr. Lister, Mr. Philip, Dr. Stewart, and Dr. Raffles are ignorant on this head, yet they publicly and constantly apply the term "Socinians" to "Unitarians," it is no doubt a difficult thing for men occupying the situation which these reverend gentlemen do, to be *completely honest*, their *craft* must be maintained"—and again, speaking of Calvinists, he says, "And so long as they choose to follow as their leader the CAIN of the reformation who slew his brother for his integrity and because his own deeds were dark and wicked, we have no right to deny them the appellation they

have chosen, although we feel no inclination to envy them their proud pre-eminence;—that petulant and wicked persecutor who triumphed in the deed of blood and rejoiced in the success of his stratagems, &c.” I have now done sufficient justice to myself by simply quoting these two parts, and would leave the reader to form his own opinion whether they be illiberal or not, but that your correspondent asserts in your last number, that it is the “system only” which he reprobates;—but I trust that the foregoing quotations sufficiently prove that this was not the ground upon which he first set out, and remarks are there most particularly levelled against *persons*,—to be sure, in the latter part of his letter he sums up a *piquant* satire against the whole body of Calvinistic worshipers; for in a continuation of my last quotation, he says “The mantle of this great prophet has indeed fallen on his disciples;” which expression, when connected with what precedes, can have no other meaning than that of designating all the followers of John Calvin—vile murderers!!! Can this be christian-like?

“Philalethes” further asks me for a definition of what I mean by a christian spirit, to this I need only reply that it is quite the reverse of what is contained in the above;—let him reflect on this and I am persuaded that he will agree with me and be more moderate in future, especially, as it is evident he is not unaccustomed to wield the pen of controversy.

I find likewise that my expression, “Unitarians may be right—Trinitarians may be right—” is misunderstood, I do not myself believe the Trinitarian doctrine to be scriptural, I cannot—for I am an Unitarian, but as such, a great advocate for toleration of free inquiry, my opinion in this respect is, that all christians whether Unitarian, or Trinitarian in all its ramifications are equally acceptable unto God, *provided they ground their belief upon diligent inquiry, provided they judge for themselves, and do not profess a doctrine merely because their ancestors did*;—in fine, I feel persuaded that if a person exercise those faculties entrusted to him by his Creator he is in the right road to salvation, for he cannot be accountable for more than he has received,—and thus, if one person, on reading the scriptures, feels persuaded that the Trinitarian belief is the most prominent, I say, that man may be as right in the eyes of God as another, with better abilities, who from the same inward conviction and from the same source, embraces Unitarianism;—from this argument we also draw another conclusion—that persons gifted with strong natural abilities and advantages will necessarily have infinitely more to account for at the day of judgement than others who are less endowed, and hence it behoves us all to improve our opportunities while yet in our power,—but more especially those whose judgement is not yet impaired by old age, and where prejudice has not yet struck

its root too deep for eradication,—here, I am aware your correspondent would stop me with the remark, that Trinitarians in general are averse in religious matters to the use of judgement and reason; this I will grant, although within my own circle of acquaintance there are many who have read the scriptures and judged for themselves and it is these, who *do* exercise their judgement, that I say may be as right as we in the eyes of the Almighty.

I believe that I have now fully explained my sentiments on this head and trust that your correspondent, will be convinced that I am no defender of *any branch* of Trinitarianism, remaining gentlemen, yours, respectfully,

G. W. V.

P. S. One more remark before I dismiss the subject, it is respecting your correspondent's conjecture that I was never a Calvinist, he is perfectly right, and I consequently labor under a disadvantage in that respect since I cannot duly appreciate the gloom and horror which that system infuses through the mind, but thus much I can say, that it is highly creditable to one, who, feeling this effect, inquires into the cause and rejects a religion, the influence of which was so prejudicial to his peace of mind, had he acted otherwise he would, according to my views on the subject, have been highly culpable for neglecting the, till then, latent spark which now began to throw its beneficial influence through the mind and which, if not fanned into a flame when the opportunity was offered, might again have been smothered in the prejudices of orthodoxy.

To the Editors of the Christian Reflector.

GENTLEMEN,

Should you judge the following lines worthy of a place in the Reflector, they are at your service. They contain two or three arguments against the dogmas of reputed orthodoxy, which I am anxious to lay before your readers.

1. It is a generally established rule in philosophy, that when one cause is sufficient to account for an effect, no other cause should be admitted. If we apply this rule to our religious inquiries, we shall find that it leads to the doctrine of the proper unity of God. One infinite being, the creator of all things, we must admit, to account for the effects we witness around us; but one such being is equal to the production and government of the universe. If for arguments sake we suppose there were three, or three hundred, such beings they would not possess a single attribute more than is possessed by one infinite being: for infinity renders an addition impracticable.

2. If there were more Gods than one, they must be possessed either of the same, or of different attributes : if of the same then the proceedings of the whole, would be exactly as that of one, if of different attributes, then would the operations of one, clash with those of another and discord and confusion prevail under the government of unequal beings. But is there any thing of this kind discoverable amongst the works of the Creator? Are not these works in all their variety tending to one and the same desirable end, the order and happiness of the general system? Must we not then conclude, that there is, and that there can be, but one God. The doctrine of the trinity as stated in the Athanasian creed, reads thus " the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God and yet there are not three Gods, but one God" and it requires " that we acknowledge every person by himself to be God and Lord." But how this can be done without making three Gods or three Lords, I am unable to conceive. One can no more be three, nor three one, than that two and two can make five.

3. It is highly reasonable to believe that the benevolent Parent of mankind should provide for the moral improvement of his creatures by means of Divine revelation. This admitted, we may inquire, what kind of an instrument is best adapted to effect the purposes of our heavenly Father. A man, a super-angelic being, or something formed by the union of God and man partaking of the nature of both, though strictly speaking neither God nor man. If any part of the divine communication consist in the example of the messenger then who so fit to give an example to men as one of their race. A being of a superior nature might exhibit a pattern worthy of the imitation of mankind : but it can never be said that such a pattern is best adapted for human beings. A superior nature might perform with ease, that which the most labored efforts of humanity could never accomplish. But when we witness a man, under the influence of religious principles, rising above the temptations of the world, and exhibiting an undeviating course of piety and virtue, we have every encouragement afforded us which can be derived from example. Thus are we led to a belief in the simple humanity of Jesus Christ. But the moment we deify the Man of Nazareth, into what a chaos of confusion are we plunged. We must then believe, that the infant suckled at the breast was the Creator, and supporter of worlds and systems innumerable. That the man who exclaimed " my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me and then yielded up the ghost," was none other than the immortal God, in whom all creatures live and move and have their being. To such conclusions are we led by a belief in the deity of Christ. Can we perform a greater service to the gospel than to strip it

of the false doctrines which were appended to it in the dark ages, and which have long concealed it from mankind?

W. FILLINGHAM.

Congleton, 17th January, 1824.

To the Editors of the Christian Reflector.

GENTLEMEN,

Should the inclosed "Thoughts" be worthy of a place in your valuable and useful work, the insertion of them will much oblige, respectfully, yours,

SAMUEL MARTIN.

THOUGHTS ON THE PASTORAL CARE AND GOODNESS OF GOD.

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want."

WHAT a peculiar privilege it is for a man to know that the God of the universe is his shepherd and guide, and that he is one of that happy fold whose ways are directed by the Most High! His mind, serene as the summer evening unobscured by a cloud, or peaceful as the lake unruffled by a breeze, enjoys a holy calm—a rest which none but faithful christians know. When dangers thickly stand around, and billows of affliction roll, he remains immoveable as the rock amidst the briny surge. Convinced of the attributes and perfections of his Maker, he has ground for sacred confidence, and trusts continually; bearing at the same time in view, that the affairs of the world are ordered in equity and justice by Him who is "too wise to err, too good to be unkind, and too powerful to fail in any of his designs." Peculiar indeed are the privileges of such a character: he enjoys perfect peace; and with the royal Psalmist can with confidence exclaim, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want."

What a beautiful metaphor is here applied to the Father of all, to illustrate his tender mercy and affection to his creatures! How endearing the light in which he is set forth! How full of consolation to the weary soul! What encouragement for the sinner to return! On this character therefore, let us for a short time reflect.

A good shepherd would liberally provide for the wants of his flock—he would keep them from pain—defend them from danger, and have their comfort continually in view. Should they unhappily stray from the fold, he would still pity them, and seek to bring them back. He would rejoice over them when found, receive them again to his favor, and promote their

happiness by every means in his power. He would lead them to still waters, and cause them to lie down in green pastures, where they might dwell in safety and peace.

And is this the character of an earthly shepherd? How excellent then must be that of the great Being, who as much exceeds an earthly shepherd in every goodness and perfection, as the heavens are higher than the earth! For his creatures he liberally provides. "He feedeth his flock like a shepherd," saith Isaiah, "and gathereth his lambs with his arm." In his pastures we continually feed, and from his bounty, all our wants, temporal and spiritual, are well supplied. "It was he who made us, and his we are: the flock of his pasture, and the people of his care."

As a good shepherd, God keepeth his people and defendeth them from danger and distress. He informs them of the dangerous consequences of sin, warning them to flee from it. He points out the pernicious effects of iniquity, directing them to avoid its bitter pains. He shews the way wherein they must walk, in order to be happy. As the kindest of shepherds, he has their welfare continually in view, and promotes it by every dispensation and enjoyments calculated for that end. Every day he causes their cup of felicity to run over. For his obedient servants he prepares living pastures, and streams of living water. He heals their diseases, he advances their pleasures. They lie down in content and repose in security, for "God is their shepherd and they sleep in peace."

When any stray from his fold, he regards them with pity and compassion, and still feels for them all the care of a shepherd. He waits to be gracious, alluring and inviting them back; and when the least desire is manifested, he receives them with open arms. He remembers no more their past offences, but cancels them for ever, and restores them to favor, as the father of the repentant prodigal, rejoices that the lost is found. In short the happiness of all is his grand design.

Yet some have represented our Almighty shepherd as partial and vindictive; who always loved a portion of his flock, and made them the exclusive objects of his care, utterly abandoning the rest, that because one had strayed from his fold, he punished all, and required the death of the innocent instead of the guilty to satisfy his fierce wrath. That this should be true is impossible: it casts a stain upon the character and perfections of God. What earthly shepherd would thus act, or choose to be represented in this light? Why charge it upon him, whose fold is the earth, and whose pasture is holiness, and who hath declared that "he is no respecter of persons, that "the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him," whose mercy is everlasting;" and who hath declared that "he willeth not the

death of a sinner, but rather that he would return and live."—God is goodness and purity itself: whatever proceeds from these attributes, must be consistent with them; therefore, he can neither be vindictive nor unjust.

Having considered God as the universal shepherd, let us for a moment glance at the characters of those who can, with David, confidently say, "they shall not want." These surely are not the profane or wicked, nor those who forget God, nor the hardened and impenitent, nor those who deny him for their keeper and wander from his fold. These cannot say, "they shall not want," for they disown God for their pastor, and forsake his guidance and care. The wicked he cannot view with approbation. The righteous alone are the objects of his peculiar regard. With a shepherd's care doth he feed them, and with a shepherd's care doth he all their wants supply. Do they hunger and thirst after righteousness? He feeds them with the bread of life, and gives them living water. Do they seek felicity? He gives them rich consolation and everlasting joy.

Art thou blest with prosperity? Remember, O man! God thy shepherd giveth it thee. Art thou in adversity? Lift up thine head, O christian! God is thy shepherd also. "Thou shalt not want." Art thou in distress or affliction? Child of the dust! murmur not at the dispensation of the Most High! The father of all was never known to forsake his children: the shepherd of all was never known to abandon his flock. Through the darkest scenes let every waiting soul rest upon the promises of him who cannot lie; looking to that blessed land, where all is light and peace and joy. Whilst as pilgrims we travel on with our faces Zion-ward, let this truth cheer our souls, "that God is good;" and in every event, whether of happiness or distress, still remember that "the Lord is our shepherd, we shall not want."

MODERN ORTHODOXY THE PERVERSION OF SCRIPTURE.

To the Editors of the Christian Reflector.

GENTLEMEN,

It is the peculiar characteristic of reputed orthodoxy, to ascribe the pre-eminence to *faith*. Hence, if this be consistent with the truth, the following passage of scripture should read thus:

1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2, 3, 13. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not *faith*, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all *charity*, so that I could remove

mountains, and have not *faith*, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not *faith*, it profiteth me nothing. And now abideth charity, hope, *faith*, these three; but the *greatest* of these is *faith*."

Such is the consistency of reputed orthodoxy with scripture! And the following contrast may be taken as a specimen of its consistency with common sense.

Faith and Charity contrasted.

Faith is the means, by which we obtain a good: charity is the good obtained.

Faith is the scaffolding, by the aid of which the building is erected: charity is the building itself.

Faith points to the bliss of heaven, and leads the way: charity is that bliss itself.

Faith is destined only for a time, and will finally cease: charity is eternal as the Deity, from whom it proceeds.

To shew, therefore, the erroneousness of modern orthodoxy, it is sufficient merely to say, that it reverses all these things. It prefers the means to the end, the scaffolding to the building, that which points to the bliss of heaven, to the bliss itself, that which is transitory and perishable, to that which is lasting and eternal.

If such a doctrine as this be not erroneous, then I think there is nothing erroneous in the world. K.

P. S. Perhaps some of your readers may point out a few more perversions of scripture by reputed orthodoxy. Such instances might tend to awaken Trinitarians to a sense of the situation in which they stand; might shew them, that they rest not in the words of God, but the words of men.

To the Editors of the Christian Reflector,

GENTLEMEN,

On turning over the pages of your current Reflector, I find an account of the Hindley, Wigan and Park Lane, Unitarian christian dinner, held at the Bear's Paw, Wigan, on Monday Jan. 12th, 1824, which closes with this remark, "Several ministers were invited to attend the meeting, but did not comply with the request." I am sorry that they did not, because it would have presented an opportunity to some individuals, amongst whom several circumstances had produced a degree of coolness, mutually to have explained, and to have renewed and manifested that kindness and sympathy of feeling, which ought to be the leading characteristic of all christians, but more especially of Unitarian christians.

As one of the absent ministers who had been invited to meet our Unitarian friends on that occasion, I beg to state, that the indisposition of a part of my family alone prevented me from "complying with the request." I moreover take this opportunity to express my thanks to the Unitarians of the above mentioned district, for the proof of their regard towards me, as evinced by their invitation; and to assure them that I shall always be happy to join my feeble efforts to theirs in promoting the spread of the holy and righteous cause which we advocate.

Believe me to be, gentlemen, yours, &c.

ROBERT CREE.

Preston, February 14, 1824.

To the Editors of the Christian Reflector,

GENTLEMEN,

A poor man, residing not one hundred miles from Nantwich, of the Methodist persuasion, who was incapable of reading, was in the habit of causing his son, a little boy, to read to him. One day reading the xv. chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, and coming to the passage, "then shall the Son deliver up the kingdom to the Father," &c. &c. "Stop boy," said the father, "read that again." He did so. The father then said, "Oh, I see the Unitarians have more reason on their side than is generally supposed, Jesus Christ cannot be God." He went to the class leader, and related to him his thoughts; a meeting of the society was called, the poor man was deemed a heretic, and of course excommunicated.

This conduct, if followed up, will be of essential service to the Unitarian cause; and it might be further promoted if some of the leaders of the Methodist body would move at the next conference that such passages as the above should be expunged from the scriptures, or that none of the people should be permitted to read them without the notes and comments of John Wesley, Dr. Coke, or Dr. A. Clarke. Yours, JUSTUS.

Religious Intelligence.

The Rev. John Grundy minister of the Unitarian congregation, Cross Street, Manchester, has accepted the invitation to become the minister of the Unitarian congregation Paradise Street, Liverpool, to which place we

learn he will remove in September next. The vacancy has been occasioned by the resignation of the Rev. John Yates, who was for more than 46 years the minister, the last 10 years of which he had for a colleague the Rev. P. Houghton, who resigned at the same time.

A Course of Lectures on the Unitarian Controversy is now delivering in the Unitarian Chapel, Hanley, Staffordshire, by the following ministers.

Jan. 4. Rev. J. Grundy, Manchester—On original Sin.—11. Rev. Dr. Carpenter, Bristol—On the Atonement.—18. Rev. T. Cooper, Newcastle—Consolations of Unitarianism in the hour of death.—19. Rev. J. H. Bransby, Dudley—On Preaching Christ.—Feb. 1. Rev. W. Fillingham, Congleton—Is Jesus Christ an object of Religious Worship?—8. Rev. G. Cheetham, Macclesfield—Sufficiency of Unitarianism for the Moral and Spiritual wants of man.—15. Rev. J. Small, Coseley—On the causes why so few comparatively embrace rational views of Christianity.—22. Rev. W. Fillingham, Congleton—The doctrine of the Trinity inconsistent with Reason and contrary to the plain declarations of Scripture.—29. Rev. H. Hutton, Birmingham—Exaltation and Dignity of Christ, on Unitarian principles.—Mar. 7. Rev. T. Cooper, Newcastle—Unitarianism and Trinitarianism compared, as to their moral tendency.—14. Rev. T. Cooper, Newcastle—Jesus Christ proved to be a Unitarian.—21. Rev. T. Cooper,—The Apostles proved to be Unitarians.—28. Rev. W. Hinks, Liverpool,—Unitarianism the Doctrine of the first ages of the Church—Progress of its corruption.

Poetry.

(From Bowring's *Matins and Vespers.*)

HYMN.

How dark—how desolate
Would many a moment be,
Could we not spring
On hope's bright wing,
O God! to heaven and Thee.

Life is a prison cell
We are doomed to occupy,
In which confin'd,
The restless mind
Pines, pants for liberty.

And sometimes streaks of light
And sunny beams we see,

They shine so bright
Thro' sorrow's night,
They needs must come from Thee.
Say, shall a morning dawn
When prison days are o'er,
Whose smiling ray
Shall wake a day,
That night shall cloud no more?
Blest hope! and sure as blest;
Life's shades of misery
Shall soon be past,
And joy at last
Waft us to heaven and Thee.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We have received T's letter, we are not much surprised, although we must confess we did not anticipate opposition of such an unmanly kind from that quarter; but priestcraft is the same whatever name it assumes; it cannot bear the light, nor will allow, so far as its influence can prevent it, the common people to be enlightened. *Junius* in our next. We are sorry the account of the Blackburn business did not arrive in time; we hope the magistrates of that district will have the honor of being introduced to an acquaintance with the higher powers. *R. Wright's* third communication on the Christian Ministry is come to hand.

The Christian Reflector,

AND THEOLOGICAL INQUIRER.

"I speak as unto wise men; judge ye what I say." PAUL.

No. 56

LIVERPOOL, APRIL 1st, 1824.

Price 4½d

BIBLICAL CRITICISM.

The meaning of the word ANHP, Aner, (MAN) in the sacred writings, as applied to Jesus Christ.

JESUS CHRIST is expressly stiled by two of his disciples going to Emmaus, a man prophet, *ανηρ προφητας*, *aner prophetas*: Luke xxiv. 19. and they must certainly know who and what he was, and could be no strangers to his person and character, after a long and intimate acquaintance with him.

N. B. The word (man *) here is shamefully omitted in our translation, and in Beza's too, whom our translators followed too servilely. But it is inserted in the Vulgate, by Arius Montanus, and in the French and Rhenish versions, and by the Dutch in the margin of their bibles. When all the Greek MSS now extant agree to preserve, and not one, perhaps, omits this word (man) it tempts one to suspect, either great negligence, or something worse, in our translators.

John i. 30. *John the Baptist saith of Jesus Christ, There cometh a man after me.*

Acts ii. 22. St. Peter, in his first sermon, with the eleven other apostles, preaching to a numerous congregation attending him, tells them expressly his notions of Jesus Christ, in these words: Ye men of Israel, hear these words, Jesus of Nazareth, a *man* approved (or made manifest) by God, by miracles, wonders and signs, which God wrought by him, amongst you, as

* There are three words used in the original, all of which are translated into English by the word *man*. The one is used for the common nature, or the frail state of mankind, and is sometimes rendered *flesh*, as all flesh is grass, or all men are frail as grass; another is used for a man generally, a *man*, the *son of man*, &c. The third is that above, and is used for a man of rank or office, as a *man* priest, or a *man* prophet, &c. &c., and ought to have been so rendered.

ye yourselves know; i. e. I appeal to you Israelites, who knew Jesus of Nazareth to be a man and a prophet, that God by him, in appearance, wrought miracles in his favour and justification; and all this was not done in private, but in the midst of you.

Acts xvii. 31. St. Paul is as express as St. Peter, and the others before-mentioned, saying, That God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world—by that *man* whom he hath ordained—and whom he hath raised from the dead.

N. B. St. Peter preaching to the Jews, and St. Paul to the Gentiles, both declared Jesus Christ to be a *man*, and did not at this time stile him God amongst the Gentiles, who well understood how the word was used among them, to signify persons of distinguished and remarkable characters. Too many such gods they worshipped already: polytheism was the reigning idolatry of all the Gentile world, which [world] was by the apostles to be converted from the worship of many gods, to the worship of the one true God, the author of the universe.

Now it ought to be considered, that when the sacred writers used the word *ανθρωπος* of Jesus Christ, they did it in that sense which was common to all that were acquainted with the Greek language, so as that whoever read it in the sacred books might understand it, as it had been used in all books written in that language, otherwise they must have added an expletive, or explanatory term, to inform their readers, wherein they differed in its use from other writers.—See *Hopton Haynes*.

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY DEFENDED, AND PRIEST-CRAFT EXPLODED.

(Continued from page 56.)

Sect. 3. Unscriptural claims to titles and distinctions which place the christian priesthood above their brethren.

Not contented with ranking as brethren and fellow servants, among the disciples and followers of Jesus; though the New Testament authorizes the ministers of the gospel to claim no higher rank or title; those who have assumed to be a priest-

hood under the christian dispensation, have called themselves successors of the Apostles, ambassadors of Jesus Christ, stewards of the mysteries of God, and the clergy, in distinction from the people, whom they call the laity. Let us examine these proud and unauthorized claims and pretensions. Though the assumption of such names and titles can confer no mental, moral, or spiritual gifts or powers; it has been highly injurious to the christian cause as the worldly spirit thus manifested scandalizes it, as men are commonly inspired with pride and vanity by being so distinguished, as it establishes a ground of respect and honor alien to the New Testament, as it tends to awe the uninformed multitude into submission to the authority, and an acquiescence in the dogmas of men who are distinguished in this unnatural and unchristian manner, and as its influence is in a direction contrary to the humility, simplicity and brotherly spirit which the gospel inculcates.

1. Not only the Bishops of Rome, but ecclesiastical dignitaries in other churches, and even some teachers among the separatists from all established churches, have pretended to be successors of the apostles. The claim to unbroken descent and regular apostolic succession in the christian ministry, has, first and last, occasioned no little angry disputation among the would-be priests and their adherents. Could such a claim be established, certainly the pope and his party would have a right to make their claim prior to any protestant ecclesiastics; for how can the latter set up the claim at all, but by asserting their legitimate descent from the former, and tracing through the church of Rome, whom they call the mother of harlots, their lineal descent from the Apostles. The fact is, no priesthood, either popish or protestant, can be descended from the Apostles, or be their successors; for the Apostles neither were, nor ever pretended to be a priesthood, in distinction from their christian brethren at large; and it is impossible they should be succeeded in an office and title which never belonged to them. But it may be asked, in what do any professed teachers of christianity, in the present day, succeed the Apostles? And where in the New Testament do we read that the Apostles were

to have any successors? Do they succeed the Apostles in their poverty, in their disinterested and gratuitous labors, and in their patient sufferings for the cause of Christ? Do they, like those divine messengers, devote themselves to a life of toil and danger, in traveling over different countries to spread the gospel, and plant christian churches? They cannot pretend that they succeed the Apostles in their extraordinary and divine mission, or in their supernatural powers; though, perhaps, they have no objection to claiming apostolic authority; but, for want of miraculous proof, they can never establish that claim. The truth is, the Apostles had no successors in their office; their office and work were peculiar, and terminated with their lives; nor can the least intimation be found in the New Testament that it was ever intended that they should have any successors. To be an Apostle it was necessary to have seen the Lord, to be qualified to be a witness of his resurrection; and none born after the times of the Apostles could be his witnesses, not having seen him. Paul adduces as a proof that he was an Apostle, the fact, that he had seen the Lord. Let those who wish to be thought successors to the Apostles give some proof that they have seen the Lord, and received a divine mission from him; till they can do this let them not appropriate to themselves what was spoken of, or to, the Apostles only.

2 It is not uncommon for the professed teachers of christianity, to call themselves the ambassadors of Jesus Christ. An ambassador is one who receives his mission and authority from the sovereign whose ambassador he is, and has the seal of his sovereign attached to his mission, to accredit him in his office, and sanction his proceedings as an ambassador. The apostles were ambassadors of Jesus Christ, they had seen him, received their mission and authority from him, were immediately sent forth by him, and had sufficient credentials to prove that the high character and office belonged to them; they had the broad seal of miracles to attest their mission and sanction their proceedings. Very different is the case, with respect to those who pretend to be the ambassadors of Christ, in the present day. They have never seen him, they have received

no commission from him, they have no extraordinary message to deliver, nor have they the seal of heaven, miraculous powers, to establish their claim to so high a distinction. Is it not evident then that they are merely pretenders to an office and a character which belong not to them? The title of ambassadors of Christ, even in the apostolic age, was not given to any persons but the apostles; because they only were the chosen witnesses, who were commissioned by Jesus, and sent forth as his representatives, vested with divine authority, and supernatural powers, to speak and act in his name. If at that time the ambassadorship belonged only to the apostles, and did not extend to ordinary ministers, surely it cannot belong to any persons in the present day. The fact is, though faithful teachers of the word may be called ministers of Jesus Christ, there are no ambassadors of Christ in the world. Those who have inconsiderately assumed the title should desist from such presumption.

3. Another title claimed by many modern teachers of religion, is that of stewards of the mysteries of God. As if they were entrusted with the secrets of heaven which are concealed from the people, and mankind were placed in dependence on them for the knowledge of those things which belong to their salvation and eternal welfare! The apostles were stewards of mysteries, as they had things to teach which were kept secret until the appearance of Jesus Christ, and which were not fully made known until they published them to the world. Paul informs us, in his writings, what those mysteries were, and plainly declares them. The apostles were made stewards of mysteries, not that they might be still kept secret; but that they might be plainly revealed, that all men might have an opportunity of understanding them: and as they executed their office faithfully, what before were mysteries is now revealed truth. It follows, that there are now no mysteries in the christian religion for men to be stewards of; nor can those who pretend to be stewards of mysteries, show us any thing which they have to teach that is not plainly made known in the holy scriptures. The same sources of information which they pos-

ness, as to christian doctrine and duty, are open to all their hearers. Is there not reason to suspect, that when teachers would have the people regard them as stewards of mysteries, they aim at something else besides the information and improvement of their hearers?

4. The distinction of clergy and laity, so long and generally adopted among christians, is totally unauthorized by the New Testament, and is incompatible with the principles of liberty, religious equality and brotherhood, plainly taught in those records of primitive christianity. All christians are God's people, his lot, his portion, ministers are no more such than their brethren; and the term *clergy*, as Dr. Campbell has well observed, means lot or inheritance, as the word *laity* does people. The Dr. says of the ministers appropriating the word *clergy* to themselves, exclusively of the body of christians at large, "It is impossible to conceive a claim in appearance more arrogant, or in reality worse founded," and goes on to show, that not the tribe of Levi only, but the whole Israelitish nation, are denominated God's clergy: Deut. xi, 29, and that in the only text in the New Testament, in which the word from which *clergy* is derived is applied to persons, (1 Peter 5, 3,) it is applied, not to ministers only, but to all christians, to the whole flock which the ministers were called to watch over and feed. [See Campbell's Lectures on Ecclesiastical History, vol. 1. pp. 297, 298, 299.] Thus according to this valuable writer, all true christians are God's clergy, and the modern restricted use of the term, by which it is made applicable to ministers only, is contrary to both the letter and spirit of the Old and New Testament. That erroneous and unscriptural use of the term implies a denial that christians at large are God's lot, his inheritance; it is arrogant on the part of the pretended clergy, and degrading to the great body of christians. It is not so much to be wondered at, that in the church of Rome, and in national hierarchies such an abuse of terms, and gross departure from christian simplicity, purity and consistency, should be found; but that Dissenters should so far forget their own principles, the example of their forefathers, and thus approximate to prelatical

language and practice, shows a sad falling off, and may excite both surprise and pain.

5. The titles and distinctions, which those who wish to be regarded as a christian priesthood, have claimed and appropriated to themselves, raise them above their brethren and fellow servants, not in worth of character, moral excellence and usefulness, but in worldly dignity, ministering to their pride, consequence, power and domination; consequently, all who wish to maintain christianity in its native simplicity and purity, and to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, ought firmly to make a stand and enter their protest against such unauthorized and arrogant assumptions. The title of reverend, generally applied to ministers of all denominations, though it is become merely complimentary, is in its sound distinctive, and we have no proof of its having been given as a mark of distinction in the first and purest christian times; besides it deserves consideration, that it is said of God, "holy and reverend is his name." So long as this title is retained, I would suggest, that it will be best to give it to all persons who are acknowledged as christian teachers, that the equality which belongs to them may be preserved: and I hope it will offend none of my brethren, for me to say of it as a dignitary of the established church is reported to have said of the Athanasian creed, "I wish we were well rid of it." Persuaded I am that few ministers of our denomination care any thing about it; but it may not be easy to disuse a custom which has so generally obtained, in particular as nothing either of authority, or of superstition, is connected with the word. Those however who want names and titles to give them weight and respectability, must be deficient in solid worth and excellence.

6. On the lofty titles which have been assumed by ecclesiastical dignitaries, in hierarchial churches, I have not time to animadvert; and, indeed, they are so glaringly inconsistent with christian simplicity, meekness and humility, that every one who attends seriously to the New Testament may perceive that the assumption of them is unauthorized by the gospel,

repugnant to its principles, and antichristian in its tendency. The whole list of ecclesiastical titles, and all the powers and prerogatives connected with them to whomsoever given, from the pretended heads of churches, down to the parish priest, so far from being consistent with genuine christianity, belong to that system which in the New Testament is described as the grand apostasy from, and gross corruption of it. It has been shown in a preceding section, that, in the apostolic writings, no titles are given to christian ministers but what simply express their office and work, as ministers of the word, overseers of the flock, and servants of the people. R. WRIGHT.

(To be continued.)

The Dissenter, No. II.

“Venerating Truth above all earthly things, I can think and speak of myself, as well as of other men, without malice and without extenuation.”—*Gilbert Wakefield.*

IN commencing a series of essays under this title, I wish to embrace a subject for the first No. which will not only be theoretically important, but practically useful. For however beautiful may be the theory, however excellent its arrangement or clear its plans, or obvious its development, yet if it cannot be brought home to the business and the bosoms of men, if it be unproductive of the interests of mankind, it can only be regarded as a vision, delightful perchance, but still a baseless fabric, less than nothing and vanity. What is denominated the Religious World has for a long period been in a state of great and constant activity. Missions at home and missions abroad, missions to the gypsies and missions to the heathen, schools for the Hibernian and education for the black, floating chapels and hedge-row lectures, tract societies and county unions, plans for the conversion of the Jews to Trinitarianism and marine bible associations, &c. &c., abundantly testify the zeal of multitudes. But in the midst of this compassing of sea and land, there is one sect which has “*apart, sat on a hill retir'd* ;” apparently

indifferent to the united energies and activity of their brethren, wrapping themselves in the mantle of their supposed superior knowledge, and from their exalted station, regarding with pity the erring and enthusiastic crowd. Whether, like those whom the poet notices, their time was occupied in deep discussions

“ Providence, foreknowledge, will and fate;
Fix'd fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute,”

and therefore could not attend to terrestrial objects, may well be questioned; but the effect of their supineness, (arising from this cause, or from timidity, or lukewarmness, or the fear of giving offence) on the progress of truth and the consequent happiness of the human race was just as pernicious, as if, like the fallen angels, they had “found no end, in wandering mazes lost.”

I am fearful it is unnecessary for me to give the title of the denomination who have thus neglected to put their hand to the plough of christian reformation, for their want of zeal has too long been a bye word, a reproach, to be unknown to its professors. I grant that a good deal has been done, especially of late years, to wipe off this stain; we have now book and tract societies and missionary associations, and funds under a variety of names, Unitarian, Southern, Missionary, Fellowship, Christian, Congregational. We are yet however but in the infancy of our efforts, there is yet a want of *combined* exertion, we are still but a rope of sand, and many of our congregations are as ignorant of the societies of their brethren, as if they were planted in the sterile region of Kamschatka. The ignorance that prevails amongst us on these matters is indeed astonishing, and what is worse, it is disgraceful. That a man who professes the opinions of a particular denomination should not be accurately acquainted with the state of the cause he advocates as far as respects that cause in another kingdom or nation may be pardoned; though in one who leads the devotions of the people and who is looked up to as their instructor even *that* may be a disputed point; but, that any one bearing these characters should not know the state of his sect in the *county* in

which he lives, almost surpasses belief. Such an one must truly be a blind leader of the blind. The fact, is the severest censure that can possibly be passed on an individual, and can scarcely be credited except by those who know of its actual existence. On this subject I can almost literally adopt the words of the apostle and say, "For many thus walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping," for their ignorance and inattention.

Any plan then which seems calculated to remove this ignorance, to awaken the inattentive, and to unite the whole body in one bond of action, certainly deserves serious consideration. The following I apprehend to be such a scheme. Let Lancashire be taken as the example, though the numbers and the names stated are of course only employed by way of argument and illustration.

The first part of the plan is to have an association of the congregations in every Hundred of the county, to meet once a quarter. In each congregation a book to be kept in which the name of every attendant on that particular society shall be entered, on his or her arriving at the age of 16. A penny weekly subscription to be opened in each society for the purpose of promoting Unitarianism in the place where such congregation is situated, and for contributing towards a general fund for the Hundred. Three delegates to be sent to every quarterly meeting, one of whom to be the minister. The number of children educated by each congregation also to be noticed. At this quarterly meeting, after a sermon has been preached and a collection made for the Hundred Fund, the delegates proceed to business, and the plan exhibited would be as follows.—At a quarterly association of the Unitarian congregations in the Hundred of West Derby, held at on

	Delegates.	No of congregation	Money received.	No of child. ren educated.
Paradise St. Lpl.	I. G. A. B. C. D.	600	£70	400
Renshaw St. Do.	W. H. W. X. Y. Z.	600	70	400
G. C. Hall St. Do.	W. S. A. B. C. D.	200	30	100
Prescot,	W. T. P. W. X. Y. Z.	300	40	250
Warrington,	E. R. D. A. B. C. D.	400	50	300
Total		1100	260	1450

Half 136

According to the sums put down, there would be £125 to assist any congregation in the Hundred, and otherwise to promote the cause; and there would remain £125, independently of the collection made, to be transmitted by the delegates chosen for the Hundred to the county Union.

The second part of the plan is the county Union, which shall consist of three delegates from each Hundred, and shall hold a meeting twice a year. The objects of this union are to grant assistance to the congregations in the county, to distribute tracts, to form libraries, to support missionaries, and to contribute towards the salaries of those ministers who are willing to devote a portion of their time to missionary purposes.

The proceedings of this meeting will therefore stand thus.

At a county Union of delegates from the Hundreds, held at _____ on _____

	Delegates	No. of congregations	No. of members	Money received	No. of children educated
Hundred of W. Derby,	A. B. C. D. E. F.	12	3,000	£140	2,000
Do. Salford,	X. Y. Z. P. L. M.	30	8,000	800	9,000
Do. Blackburn,	N. O. P. Q. R. S.	10	2,000	100	1,300
&c. &c.		52	13,000	540	12,300
				Half 270	

According to the sums mentioned, there would be £270 to be devoted to the objects enumerated by the county Union, and there would remain £270 independently of the collection made after the sermon at the annual meeting of the Union, to be transmitted forward by the three delegates to be chosen from the Union to attend the circuit meeting.

The third part of the plan is the Circuit meeting. This meeting to be held annually and to have similar objects as the Union, only on a more extended scale. Its statement would be;

At a Circuit meeting of delegates from the county Unions of the Northern Circuit, held at _____ on _____

	Delegates	No. of congregations	No. of society members	Money received	No. of children educated
Lancashire,	A. B. C. D. E. F.	52	13,000	£270	12,300
Yorkshire,	W. X. Y. Z. N. P.	60	20,000	400	20,000
Northumberland,	A. B. C. D. E. F.	30	8,000	160	5,000
Durham,	W. X. Y. Z. N. P.	10	1,600	80	800
&c. &c.		152	42,600	910	38,100
				Half 455	

There would thus be £455 to devote to the Northern Circuit, and £455 independently of the collection after the sermon, to transmit forward by three delegates to the general annual Association of the Unitarians of Great Britain.

The fourth part of the plan is the General Association of delegates from all the Circuits. The objects of this Association are to watch over the civil rights of the denomination, the establishment of printing presses at which the various Unitarian works should be printed, and the promotion of the cause all over the world. From this Association a yearly epistle to all the congregations should be sent, detailing the state of the body generally and particularly, and suggesting plans for the dissemination of the principles of pure and undefiled religion. In a few lines we should then see the number and resources of our congregations. As thus :

At the annual Assembly of Delegates from the Circuits, held at on

	Delegates	No. of congregations	No. of members	Money received	No. of children educated
Northern Circuit,	A. B. C. D. E. F.	152	42,500	£455	98,100
Midland Circuit,	N. P. X. Y. Z. O.	60	14,000	300	12,000
Home Circuit,	A. B. C. D. E. F.	100	25,000	270	22,000
Norfolk Circuit,	X. Y. Z. M. T. O.	40	12,000	200	7,500
Western Circuit,	M. O. L. Y. Q. R.	120	22,000	450	25,000
Oxford Circuit,	A. B. C. F. E. D.	30	7,500	170	4,500
Middlesex,	X. Y. T. M. L. W.	50	14,000	550	14,000
Cheshire,	A. B. C. D. E. F.	60	11,400	330	7,500
North Wales,	X. Z. U. V. W. N.	40	8,700	112	6,250
South Wales,	M. S. J. K. P. J.	70	17,500	270	9,000
		722	185,800	£2,157	146,750

Several remarks on this plan, and observations on the use and abuse of Fellowship Funds, I must reserve to my next essay.

RESTRICTOR.

DR. ADAM CLARKE,

On the Acts of the Apostles ; or, the testimony of the learned and able advocate of Methodism, in favor of Unitarian Christianity.

To the Editors of the *Christian Reflector*.

GENTLEMEN,

Unitarians very justly deem *The Acts of the Apostles* an unanswerable argument in proof of their doctrine. For that which it contains, is precisely the doctrine which they believe. And it were incredible to suppose, that the apostles did not preach the gospel.

With one exception, they had been the companions of Jesus during the whole of his ministry. At the conclusion of it, they were commissioned by him, to go forth, and preach the gospel to every creature. For this purpose, they were promised the assistance of the Holy Spirit, to lead them into all the truth, or, to bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever they had heard of Christ. They traveled many thousands of miles, preached in a great variety of places, and established numerous churches. They labored indefatigably, as christian missionaries, to evangelize the heathens, for about 33 years; for the Acts of the Apostles include this period. Such was their zeal, in their missionary labors, that they braved persecution in every form; and most of them sealed the doctrines which they preached, with their lives.

Under these circumstances, they must have preached the gospel;* and this gospel is handed down to posterity, in a regularly connected history, written by one of their own party, for the benefit of christians in every age.

Impressed by these considerations, it was with great pleasure I lately read, in Dr. Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible, his preface to the book of the Acts. And you will probably think with me, that it may not be unimportant, to record the following extracts in the Reflector. I have added a few remarks to them, but the extracts are faithfully made.

The Doctor observes, "All the promises which Christ gave of the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, are shewn here to have been fulfilled in the most eminent manner."

The promises here alluded to, are contained in the 14th, and two subsequent chapters of John's gospel; the most remarkable of which, is the following: xiv. 26, "But the comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

The Doctor, therefore, very properly adds, "It is truly a fifth gospel, as it contains the glad tidings of peace and salvation to the whole Gentile world." It is not merely a part of the glad tidings which it contains, but the whole of them; for it is sufficient for salvation.

He says further, "In the book of the Acts we see how the church of Christ was formed and settled. The apostles simply proclaim the truth of God relative to the passion, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ: and God accompanies their testimony with the demonstration of his spirit."

Where were the doctrines of reputed orthodoxy? the trinity, original sin, and vicarious sacrifice, &c? And how strange it is, that, in the absence of these doctrines, which are supposed

* Would not twelve Methodist Missionaries, preaching for 33 years, preach the doctrines of Methodism?

ed to be so essential to salvation, God should "accompany the testimony of the apostles with the demonstration of his spirit!"

But did not the apostles proclaim more than the "death (passion they say nothing about) resurrection, and ascension of Christ." Did they not proclaim that he was the Messiah, by repeated allusions to the prophecies? Did they not say that he was a man approved of God &c.? that he was the prophet like unto Moses? that God had made him both Lord and Christ? that God had exalted him to be a Prince and a Savior? that God had anointed him with the Holy Ghost and with power? that God had ordained him to be the judge of quick and dead? and that God had sent him to bless them, by turning away every one of them from his iniquities? Did they not proclaim repentance, for the remission of sins? Did they not say, that they who repented and turned to God, should do works meet for repentance? And did they not say, that God had appointed a day in the which he would judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he had ordained; whereof he had given assurance unto all men, in that he had raised him from the dead?

The Doctor goes on to say, in connection with the above, "What was the consequence? Thousands acknowledge the truth, embrace christianity, and openly profess it at the most imminent risk of their lives."

If thousands acknowledged the truth, and embraced christianity, from the apostles' preaching, the apostles must have preached truth and christianity. This the Doctor fully admits; though others, not finding the doctrines of reputed orthodoxy in the book of the Acts, have been pleased to assert the contrary; and have imputed a sort of worldly policy to the apostles, lest by an open avowal of the doctrines of the trinity, they might wound the prejudices of their hearers. The following are a few specimens of this nature.

CHRYSOSTOM: Peter taught nothing clearly concerning Christ's divinity; he dwelt upon his humanity, that being unaccustomed to this, they might be prepared for what they were to be taught afterwards."—"The apostles concealed the doctrine of the miraculous conception, on account of the incredulity of the Jews with respect to it."

THEODORET: "The apostles in mentioning the subjection of Christ to the Father, spake of him more lowly than was necessary for their advantage."

ATHANASIUS: "the blessed apostles, with great prudence, in the first place, taught what related to the humanity of our Savior to the Jews, that having fully persuaded them, from his miraculous works, that Christ was come, they might afterwards bring them to the belief of his divinity." "The apostles of our Lord, and our Lord himself, answered concerning himself as a man."

Such was the method by which these Trinitarian Fathers, as they are called, accounted for the silence of the apostles, with respect to the peculiar doctrine of the trinity.

Dr. Adam Clarke, on the contrary, says, "The religion of Christ stands in no need either of human "cunning" or power. It is the religion of God, and is to be propagated by his power: this the book of the Acts fully shews; and in it we find the "true" model, after which every "christian" church should be builded. As far as any church can shew that it has followed this model, so far it is "holy" and "apostolic." And when all churches or congregations of people, professing christianity, shall be founded and regulated according to the doctrines and discipline laid down in the book of the Acts of the Apostles, then, the aggregate body may be justly called the holy apostolic, and catholic church."

These are important admissions in favor of the Unitarian doctrine; and if the members of the Wesleyan body of Methodists, properly impressed by them, were to study the book of the Acts, we might expect that great numbers would "come over to Macedonia and help us."

The Doctor says, further, "As they had but one God, so they had but one mediator between God and man, the "Lord Jesus Christ."

This passage does not occur in the Acts, though the sense of it is there contained. It is met with in 1 Tim. ii. 5; but then, it is "the man Christ Jesus," not "the Lord Jesus Christ." And it is not a little remarkable, that the Doctor should keep out of sight the word man, and substitute for it the word Lord. He, however, admits, that "the apostles had but one God, and one mediator between God and man;" and he says nothing about the trinity, or the deity of Jesus Christ.

He proceeds, in connection with the above, "They received him (i. e. Jesus Christ) as the "gift" of God's eternal "love;" sought and found redemption in his blood; and in a holy and useful life, shewed forth the "virtues" of him who had called them from darkness into his marvellous light: for "no" profession of faith was then considered of "any worth," that was not supported by that "love" to God and man which is then the fulfilling of the law, which is the "life" and "soul" of "obedience" to the divine testimonies, and the ceaseless spring of benevolence and humanity. This is the religion of Jesus Christ, as laid down and exemplified in this blessed book."

What this religion is, which the Doctor admits to be the religion of Jesus Christ," will appear evident from the following summary of the book of the Acts.

Peter's preaching at the day of Pentecost, Acts ii. Christ: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God, by miracles, &c. which God did by him; taken, and with wicked hands crucified and slain by the Jews; raised from the dead by God; exalted

by God; sits on the right hand of God; and made Lord and Christ by God. Repentance for the remission of sins.

Three thousand converts made by this sermon; preached immediately after the effusion of the Holy Spirit.

Peter's preaching, after healing the lame man who was laid at the gate of the temple, Acts iii. Jesus: the Son of God; glorified by the God of their fathers; raised from the dead by God; the prophet like unto Moses; raised up and sent by God to bless them, in turning them away from their iniquities; in him all the kindreds of the earth to be blessed; spoken of by Samuel and all the prophets. To be sent by God at his second coming. The people to repent and be converted that their sins may be blotted out.

Peter's preaching, when examined before Annas, the high priest, &c., Acts iv. Christ: Jesus Christ of Nazareth; crucified by the Jews; raised from the dead by God; the head of the corner; salvation in no other name. In a prayer after this, when the apostles were assembled together in a private room, Christ, spoken of as the Lord's Christ; the holy child (servant) Jesus; and God is mentioned as the Maker of heaven and earth, &c.

Peter's preaching before the council, when commanded not to teach any more in the name of Jesus, Acts v. Christ: slain and hanged on a tree by the Jews; raised up by the God of their fathers; exalted with the right hand of God, to be a Prince and Savior, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins. The apostles are witnesses of these things; ought to obey God rather than men.

Peter's preaching on the occasion of Simon the sorcerer, &c. Acts viii. Repentance and forgiveness of sins.

Philip's preaching to the man of Ethiopia, Acts viii. Christ: the Son of God; faith in this only required before baptism. The 53rd chapter of Isaiah, in which Christ is spoken of as "a man of sorrows," applied to him.

Paul's preaching immediately after his conversion, Acts ix. Christ: the Son of God.

Peter's preaching at the house of Cornelius, Acts x. God: no respecter of persons: all in every nation accepted with him, that fear him, and work righteousness. Christ: Jesus of Nazareth; anointed by God with the Holy Ghost and with power; God was with him; slain and hanged on a tree by the Jews; raised up the third day by God; the apostles commanded to preach and to testify, that he was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead; the apostles witnesses of all these things. This sermon confirmed by the communication of the Holy Spirit.

Paul's preaching at Antioch in the synagogue, Acts xiii. Christ: of the seed of David; raised up by God to be a Savior; condemned and slain by the Jews; laid in a sepulchre;

raised from the dead by God; the Son of God; a man, through whom is preached the forgiveness of sins; the gospel, glad tidings; the apostles witnesses unto the people.

Paul's preaching at Thessalonica in the synagogue, Acts xvii. Reasoned three sabbath days out of the scriptures; alledged that Christ must have suffered; risen from the dead; and that Jesus, whom he preached was Christ.

Paul's preaching at Athens, Acts xvii. God: the maker of the world; Lord of heaven and earth; made of one blood all nations of men to dwell together; all his offspring; all live, and move, and have their being in him; commandeth all men every where to repent; because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

Paul's preaching at Ephesus, Acts xx. Taught publicly, and from house to house; kept back nothing that was profitable unto them; shunned not to declare the whole counsel of God; testified both to Jews and Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ; received his ministry from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God; continued thus for the space of three years, and ceased not to warn them night and day with tears.

Paul's preaching before Felix, Acts xxiv. Worships the God of his fathers; believes all things that are written in the law and the prophets; has hope toward God, which the Jews allow, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust; in this exercises himself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men; reasons of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come.

Paul's preaching before Agrippa, Acts xxvi. Christ: Jesus of Nazareth. The apostle sent by Christ to the Gentiles, to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified through faith in Christ; shewed that men should repent, and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance; witnesses both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come; that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people and to the Gentiles.

Such is the holy, apostolic, true model of every christian church; such is the truth, the christianity, the religion of Jesus Christ; which the apostles preached, and which thousands acknowledged, embraced, and openly professed. And such is the religion, the christianity, which UNITARIANS acknowledge, embrace, and openly profess.

Henceforth, then, Unitarians need not fear; if the testimony

of so able and learned an advocate of christian truth, as Dr. Adam Clarke, can impart consolation to the mind. "But we receive not testimony from man." We know in whom we believe, and why we believe; and we feel that our faith is founded upon a rock. "On the preaching of the apostles, we take our stand. It appears to us decisive of the whole controversy. Every individual who wishes to ascertain the genuine doctrines of Jesus and his apostles, should read with the utmost seriousness, the history of their Acts. Their sermons, conceive, contain the doctrines of Unitarianism only. And, however little this may be known or believed, or however little it may be attended to, yet, 'no sincere adherent of truth has just cause for dejection. For the truth of God cannot fail, but with his power. It is a rock which will stand unshaken amidst the roughest storms, and smile at the idle rage of winds and billows.'" * K.

* Appendix to Mr. Harris's Sermon, entitled, "Unitarianism the only Religion that can become Universal." p. 66.

To the Editors of the Christian Reflector.

GENTLEMEN,

Your correspondent G. W. V. in his reply to me in your last number, remains exactly where he set out. Nothing that he has offered affects, in the least, my former remarks. He glides between two subjects and touches neither; or if at all convinced, he appears to be one, who,

"convinced against his will,
"Is of the same opinion still."

I now take my leave of him, wishing that he may distinguish with more accuracy, and avoid all compromise with error.

Yours, truly,

PHILALETHES.

Orthodoxiana.

The following lines, written by a Lady, after reading Dr. Priestley's Sermon on Dr. Price, are too good a specimen of an Orthodox spirit to be lost.

Accurs'd the man whose impious aim and end
Undeifies his God, and deifies his friend;
Of all his virtues *this* the climax made,
"He ne'er to Jesus had devotion paid."
Deluded mind! to make *his crime thy boast*,
That crime for which relentless souls are lost.
And is there praise in heaven for unbelief,
Which feeds in hell the never-ending grief?
Thou true dissenter from all sacred truth,
Bane of our age, corrupter of our youth;

Foe to thy God, and Satan's cov'nant friend,
 Who would the Godhead from the Savior rend,
 Pluck from the fountain light's life giving beams,
 And dry the source of earth's refreshing streams :
 Less darkness our benighted world should know,
 And tears less sad should every eye o'erflow,
 Whence the atonement of thy nature's guilt,
 But in that sacred blood on Calv'ry spilt?
 Or, canst thou stand in thy own fancy'd dress,
 The thin-spun web of thy own righteousness,
 Before that God who is consuming fire, (Heb. xii. 29.)
 Who *weighs for action* the unform'd desire?
 In whose pure sight the heavens are not clean,
 And fall in th' angelic host is seen. (Job iv. 18.)
 Shrink at the thought, nor dare to venture *there*,
 Where seraphs veil their face in holy fear; (Isaiah iv. 6.)
 Nor more let thy unhallow'd lips o'erflow,
 To win apostate souls to endless woe!
 But preach *that* God who has to all enjoind,
 The Son to *honor* as th' *ETERNAL MIND*: (John v. 23.)
 One with the *FATHER*, and the *Spirit One*,
 As *light*, and *air*, and *heat* compose the sun.
 "Let us make man in all our image blest," (Gen. i. 26.)
 And let the heavenly transcript stand confest.
 No *Unitarian Deity* here speaks,
JEHOVAH PLURAL forth in splendor breaks.
 A *CHRIST degraded* is a *GOD deny'd* :
 Insult and mockery all your faith beside.
 That *Corner Stone*, Oh! man, blasphem'd by *thee*,
 Shall *thee* to powder grind through sad eternity!
 Avert it Heav'n! who didst a *Paul* convert,
 And send *conviction* to a *Priestley's heart*!

* Dr. Priestley calls the Lord Jesus, "That Corner Stone of Idolatry."

The Caterer,

No. XVI.

"Plinius major dicere solebat, nullum esse librum tam malum, ut non aliquâ parte posset prodesse."

Jupiter Capitolinus Metamorphosed into St. Peter.

"THE custom of kissing objects of religious reverence," so universally prevailing in Italy, seems to have been a mark of affection formerly bestowed on the images of the heathen gods with equal profusion. At present, nothing meets the eye more frequently than the wood of a crucifix deeply worn by the lips of the devout. Nay, I have seen the waxen image of a saint duly provided with bronze feet to prevent attrition; and the toe of the statue of St. Peter, formed of that metal out of an old Jupiter Capitolinus, in the great church of the same name at Rome, is worn perfectly bright."

Blunt's Vestiges of Ancient Manners in Modern Italy.

Connexion between Heathen Temples and Orthodox Churches.

"THERE is a remarkable connexion between the present churches and the ancient temples of Italy and Sicily. The names of many of them, together with other circumstances, afford traces of their former consecration. Thus the temple of Vesta is now the church of the Madonna of the sun; fire being the prevailing idea in both appellations. That of Romulus and Remus is now Cosmo and Damion, not only brothers, but twin brothers. The site of the old *Templum Salutis* is supposed to be occupied by the church of St. Vitale, if not an imaginary saint, at least one, whose name was selected as doing little violence to that of *Salus*. In the church of La Maria Maggiore, the cradle or manger in which our Savior was laid is amongst the relics; a peculiarity very probably derived from that budding having succeeded the temple of Juno Lucina. At a short distance from the old Lavinium, is a chapel dedicated to La Anna Petronilla. Here we have, no doubt, a corruption of Anna Perenna, the sister of Dido, who was cast ashore upon the coast of Italy near the Numicius; a point corresponding with the situation of this little church. On that occasion having accidentally met with Æneas and Achates, and rejected all terms of reconciliation with them, she was warned by the shade of Dido in a dream to escape from the treachery of Lavinia. In the sudden consternation excited by this vision, she is said to have precipitated herself into the Numicius, of which she became the protecting nymph,—whilst games, described at length by Ovid, were instituted to her honor. Thus Anna, the sister of the virgin, has inherited the seat and credit of Anna, the sister of the queen of Carthage, on condition of adding to her former names, that of Petronilla."

Blunt's Vestiges of Ancient Manners in Modern Italy.

Religious Intelligence.

As the public attention appears to have been considerably excited to the circumstances of the interruption of Unitarian worship, which took place in Blackburn, in the month of January last, a brief sketch of the particulars may not be uninteresting to our readers.

Placards addressed to the "Friends of Free Inquiry!" had announced, that on Monday evening, the 5th January, the Rev. George Harris, of Bolton, would deliver a discourse on the superiority of Unitarianism to Trinitarianism. At the time appointed Mr. Harris attended, and a very crowded audience was assembled to hear him. The text was, "To the poor the Gospel is preached." In the course of the sermon, after stating that there was only one passage in the four evangelists which

was brought forward to prove the doctrine of the Trinity, a man shouted out, "Then thou makest Jesus Christ a liar, dost thou?" This interruption occasioned great noise in the place, and a serious disturbance might have ensued, had not the preacher immediately addressed the audience on the impropriety and unlawfulness of the man's conduct. No further notice would have been taken of this individual's behavior, had he not in the subsequent part of the week boasted, in various companies, of his feat, and threatened that he would again exhibit his prowess in a similar manner, and exultingly stated that if he did so he knew he should be protected. But thus attempted to be over-awed, the Unitarians of Blackburn determined to appeal to the Magistrates for protection, and issued a summons to the offending party. The case in due time came on for a hearing. The witnesses made their charge. The offender was called on for his defence. He acknowledged that he had done as was stated against him, but that his reasons were, that having attended at the same place the previous Monday night, on which a conference was held, he thought this was a similar meeting, and therefore had put his question; and that knowing what the preacher said about the words "God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost" not being to be found in the Bible was a lie, he thought he had a right to say so. The Magistrate then said, "You thought then, as the bills were headed 'Friends of Free Inquiry,' it was a debate?" The defendant of course replied to this *leading* question, "Yes." The sitting was thereupon adjourned.

The following week, on coming into court, the Magistrate instantly decided against the complaint, and in favor of the interruption; 1st, Because a debate having been held in the place of worship, the licence was vitiated; and 2ndly, Because the bills being headed, "Friends of Free Inquiry," any one had a right to propose such questions as he deemed proper.

Notwithstanding this decision, an action would still have lain against the offender, either at the Quarter Sessions or Assizes, but it was judged better after *such* an exposition of the law, not to proceed farther, unless any fresh interruption should occur.

As to the animadversions which have been made on this affair in the "Blackburn Mail," they are too contemptible for notice; inasmuch as the sturdy oak cannot be injured by the bending Ash; nor will the cause of true Religion ever be advocated by writers of *licentious poetry*, or the precepts of the Gospel ever be reduced to practice by *convicted libellers*. Such characters never manifest "the Spirit of the Book" of Life.

Our readers will be glad to learn that Unitarian worship continues to be regularly conducted every Sunday at Blackburn, and that there is an improving prospect, notwithstanding the efforts of the bigotted, the time-serving and the tyrannical, of

much good being effected and of a permanent congregation being established. May the prospect be realized.

On Sunday and Monday, the 18th and 19th April, the Unitarian Christian Congregation, assembling in the Unitarian Meeting-house, Moor Lane Bolton, will hold its second anniversary. The Rev. W. J. Fox, of London, will preach. And on Monday a public dinner will be held in the Cloth Hall at one o'clock, the Rev. George Harris in the chair; Mr. Thomas Cooper, vice-president.

Opening of Finsbury (London) Unitarian Chapel.

The New Chapel erected by the congregation lately assembling in Parliament Court, Artillery Lane, under the pastoral care of the Rev. W. J. Fox, in South place, Finsbury, was opened on Sunday, the 1st February, with morning and evening service. Mr. Fox preached in the morning on the Spirit of Christianity the same as the Spirit of Unitarianism, and in the evening, on Paul's Discourse at Athens. He was assisted in the devotional parts of the service by the Rev. Russel Scott, of Portsmouth. The Chapel was on both occasions crowded to excess. The morning Sermon, together with the Address on laying the First Stone, is published.—On the following day, Monday, the 2nd Feb. the members of the congregation, and the friends of the Chapel not of the congregation, dined together, to the number of 185, at the London Tavern, Mr Fox in the Chair. This meeting was successful in its object, that of procuring pecuniary aid to the congregation in their laudable efforts for the common cause. We understand that the Chapel has continued to be crowded at every service, and that all the seats are engaged.—*Christian Reformer.*

The following is the introduction to the Sermon on the occasion:

"Sacred be this building to the worship of the only God, the Father of Jesus Christ our Lord, his Father and our Father, his God and our God!

"May his Almighty blessing attend the services which shall be conducted within these walls, rendering them effective for the promotion of an enlightened faith in christianity, sincere and constant obedience to its precepts, and the full enjoyment of its consolations.

"And may those, by whose exertions and primarily for whose accommodation this chapel has been erected, behold, in their own moral improvement, and in the conversion of others to the genuine gospel, the work of the Lord prospering in their hands."

Original Poetry.

An Address to the DEVIL, founded on the popular notions entertained of him; the statement of which is a sufficient exposure of their absurdity.

IDEAL Being, whom weak mortals dread,
Phantom of darkness, by vain fancy bred,
Nourish'd by superstition vile and base,
Idol or bugbear of a servile race:
Let me describe thee, as of thee conceive
Those who thy being and thy power believe.
Creature of God; yet rival of his throne;
All but omnipotent the world thee own.
An angel fallen from a glorious state,
Bound in the adamantine chains of fate;
Yet through thy fall ordain'd to rise and reign,
O'er captive millions in eternal pain:
Hurl'd down to triumph, and an empire win,
Unbounded as the range of death and sin,
Eternally to fix thy hateful throne
O'er ruined nations endlessly thy own.
They say, in hell, thy prison, in strong chains,
Fast bound thou art, feeling immortal pains;
Yet in mid air aloft, in regal state,
Prince of its power, thou hold'st thy potent seat:
That of this nether world thou art the God,
And 'mongst its mightiest chiefs hast thine abode.
A creature, yet not limited to place;
In hell, the air, o'er earth's extended face,
Found, at one point of time, trying thy arts,
Suggesting crimes, and prompting human hearts
To schemes destructive, spreading fatal snares,
T' intrap poor souls, and take them unawares.
Mighty heroic deeds of thee are told,
Of late achieved, or done in days of old:
How six days' work of God, by one great blow,
By thee was marr'd, and lordly man laid low:
How, when a God came down and died, of yore,
This ruin'd world to ransom and restore,
Thou, by thy wiley arts, still captive led
Millions for whom their mighty Maker bled:
That while a few were to his yoke regain'd,
Thy subjects hege the multitudes remained:
How, though the Spirit, person all divine,
Third in the Deity, the conflict join,
Thee to defeat, thy captives to release,
Still firm thou stand'st, thy subjects still increase.
A lasting empire mortals to thee give,
Where round thee millions shall in torments live.
What though thy kingdom be transferr'd to hell,
Thy subjects all in fire and darkness dwell;
Confed'rate with thee in rebellion still,
They'll rage 'gainst heav'n and heaven's eternal will;

Thy hellish rage thou still wilt gratify,
 In those destroying who can never die :
 Under thy yoke they'll endlessly remain,
 And God's decree immortalize thy reign.
 Thy meaner feats I stop, not to relate,
 With witches, goblins, underlings of state
 Who tend thy court ; nor how thy alter'd shape
 Seems serpent, toad, or dragon, cat or ape ;
 Nor how, in various forms, mid gloom of night,
 Thou play'st strange freaks, old wives and boys to fright.
 Thy mightier deeds, the conquests thou hast won,
 Are told ; let this suffice ; my tale is done.

An Appeal to reputed Orthodox Teachers respecting the above.

Ye christian teachers let me turn to you ;
 Say can the notions here express'd be true ?
 Hath God, th' all perfect, wise, and good and just,
 This world with such a dreadful monster curst ?
 Can things so contradictions be received
 By sober-minded men, or be believed ?
 If pow'rs so strange by creature be possess'd,
 Say, who but God could him with them invest ?
 What creatures have, they must from God receive :
 Such wond'rous pow'rs would he to Satan give ?
 Hath God a being only evil made,
 Against his throne to make perpetual head,
 To counteract his plans, his works deface,
 Destroy his offspring of the human race,
 The reign of sin and death to eternize ;
 Is such the work of the all just and wise ?
 If first made good, he turn'd the good to ill,
 Dependant still on his Creator's will,
 Would that eternal, holy, righteous one,
 Support him now, the rival of his throne,
 Such pow'r and skill still give him to employ
 A world to ruin, and frail men destroy ?
 If he who all things made be God alone,
 Where will you fix his impious rival's throne ?
 Since over all he rules, who all sustains,
 For Satan's empire, say, what place remains ?
 Since he, whose pow'r and wisdom all things fill,
 Still governs all things by his sov'reign will,
 No evil pow'r let mortal creatures fear,
 But serve the Lord, and trust his faithful care.

R. W.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

K, on Trinitarianism incompatible with the Lord's Prayer, in our next.

We think *Homo's* conclusion is just ; "That the holding of Slaves is totally inconsistent with both the Spirit and Letter of the Gospel, an offence against God and man." We shall be glad to be favored with his remarks in time for our next Number.—*Senex*, on the Protestant Doctrine of the Atonement having a worse moral tendency than the Popish Doctrine of Indulgences, in our next.

F. B. Wright, Printer, Castle Street, Liverpool.

The Christian Reflector, AND THEOLOGICAL INQUIRER.

"I speak as unto wise men; judge ye what I say" PAUL.

No. 57. LIVERPOOL, MAY 1st, 1824. Price 4½d

BIBLICAL CRITICISM.

JESUS A MAN—THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD.

Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ. Matt. i. 16.

THAT Jesus Christ had the several affections, passions, properties, and infirmities, belonging to the human nature, is not denied by those who embrace the doctrine of the Trinity; but allowed and agreed, I think, universally: yet it may not be amiss to take notice of some particulars, which are arguments that may convince an unbiassed judgment, that Christ was born, grew up, eat, drank, loved, grieved, wept, was terrified, and died, like other men, &c.

St. Matthew, in the first chapter of the present copies known yet in the west of Europe, incontestably induceth Christ's genealogy from Joseph and his ancestors. If this pedigree be a true one, then Christ had Joseph for his father; and Mary, as all agree, was his mother. If the pedigree did not truly belong to Jesus Christ, no doubt, the Jews would have exposed it, and shewn its inconsistency with the last verses of the first chapter of St. Matthew, if that was ever seen and read among the first Hebrew christians. And the inconsistency is such, that it is not possible to reconcile it. And it is observable, that among Christ's neighbours and countrymen, and his disciples too, we find, he was always taken for the son of Joseph. Mat. xiii. 54, 55, 56. *Is not this (person) the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary; and his brothers James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us?* Mark vi. 3. are much the same words. Luke iii. 23, owns he

was supposed, or thought to be the son of Joseph. The Nazarenes, with whom he lived near thirty years, hearing him preach, said, *Is not this the son of Joseph?* Luke iv. 22. And more yet, John vi. 42; the Jews, his hearers, say, *Is not this JESUS, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?* Now all these passages, indeed, are fully consistent with St. Matthew's pedigree, but cannot be reconciled to the eight last verses of his first chapter. Besides, Christ himself, in the four gospels, styles himself above eighty times the son of man; one would think, on purpose to obviate any false notions of him in succeeding ages. St. Stephen, Acts vii. 56, and St. John, Rev. i. 13, xiv. 4, call Christ *the son of man*. In all which places it is admitted, and is indeed incontestable, that Christ was a perfect man, as it is expressed in the Athanasian creed: and he could not be a perfect man according to that creed, without a reasonable soul, and human flesh; nor could he be a perfect man, if not begotten by a human father, as well as mother, in the usual sense of the words, son of man, through all the bible. And he could not be perfect God in the Athanasian sense, for then he must be Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And if he was perfect man, as Adam was, still he was a created being.

Υἱος τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου, *Son of the most high GOD*. Mark v. 7. And by St. Peter, Mat. xvi. 16, Christ is called, *the Son of the living GOD*; which St. Mark viii. 29, expresseth thus: *Thou art the Christ*. And St. Luke xi. 20, thus: *Thou art the Christ of GOD*. And St. John vi. 69, thus: *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living GOD*. Nathaniel saith, John i. 49, *Thou art the Son of GOD*. And others, not disciples, Mat. xiv. 33, say to Christ, *Truly thou art a Son of God*. And so said the centurion, and his attendants, Mat. xxvii. 54, *Truly this person was a Son of GOD*. John the Baptist, John i. 34, styles Christ a, or the Son of GOD. And Christ owns, John x. 36, that he called himself the Son of GOD. In this last remarkable passage, the following things, things of great weight and consequence, are carefully to be observed.

1st. The cavil of the Jews, who charged Christ with making himself equal with God; John x. 29, compared with John v.

17, 18, 19, 20, 26, 27, 30, 36. Though he told them, John x. 25, That the works or miracles he wrought were in the name, that is, by the authority, of the Father, who indeed did those works, John v. 20, 30. The Father sheweth the Son, what himself (the Father) is doing. *I (the Son) can do nothing of myself*, viii. 28. *The Father who dwelleth in me, he doeth the works*, xiv. 10. Therefore your cavil is vain, *O ye Jews ; who say, I (Christ) make myself equal with GOD : and so is their opinion vain*, who maintain a co-equality.

2d Christ did not say, he was God, or equal with God, John v. 18, x. 33, but Christ himself tells us, John x. 36. that he only said, *he was the Son of GOD* ; and he justifies himself upon a supposition, that if he said, that he was GOD, that would by no means make good their charge of blasphemy ; for, saith he, citing Psalm lxxxii. 6, Judges or magistrates are called gods in your sacred writings. And besides, seeing I am sanctified, and sent by the Father, upon an extraordinary message to the world, I might upon that account have been called God, without blasphemy ; yet I did not say I was God, but only, that I am the Son of God ; whereas your text saith (of the judges, &c.) *Ye are all gods, and all sons of the most high.*

3d. By Christ's answer, and his judgment too, it is evident that we may not (as he did not allow it in his own case) argue from these words, (God, and Son of God) that Christ is God, in the strictest and highest sense, if he be stiled God, or the Son of God.

Yet how common is the language of our divines in their doxologies—to GOD the Son, &c. Words that are never to be found in all the New Testament ; and never to be reconciled to the reason of the wisest man ; for the supreme God cannot possibly be, or be conceived to be a Son.

As Christ has taught us, that we cannot argue, that Christ is the supreme God, from his being called God, or the Son of God : so we justly argue, that since the words, Son or Sons of God, are used of persons eminent in office, rank, and worth, by Christ himself, and others his followers and disciples ; these

terms alone are not conclusive, and will not determine what is the true nature and essence of Jesus Christ.

Christ saith, *Blessed are the peace makers, for they shall be called the sons of GOD*: Mat. v. 9, and Christ saith, *Bless them who curse you—that ye may be, or become the sons of your Father*; that is GOD, v. 45, Or as St. Luke vi. 25 *Ye shall be sons of the Most High*. Note, c. viii. v. 28. Christ himself is called the Son of the Most High; as he told his disciples they also should be, and be called.

Christ saith of those who are risen from the dead, that they are like unto the angels, and are the sons of God. Luke xx. 36.

Rom. viii. 14 – 19 St. Paul saith, *As many as are led by the spirit of God, or a godlike spirit, they are the sons of GOD*. ix. 26. Instead of being called God's people, they should be called the sons of God.

2 Cor. vi. 18, *Ye shall be my sons and daughters saith the Lord Almighty*.

Gal. iii. 26. *Ye are all the sons of God, by or through the christian faith or religion*.

All these phrases are rightly understood, not of a natural but of a spiritual filiation, or son-ship; and signify the spiritual relation or state whereunto true christians are adopted by God, upon their sincere profession of the true religion, and conformity to the laws of his kingdom. As such they are truly styled sons and daughters of God; born of God. But it is very observable, that although St. John in his gospel, and after, in his first epistle, uses γεννω, in its derivatives, (which signify to be begotten, or born of, &c. yet he never once takes the least notice by those words, of Christ's eternal, or supernatural generation, which points are so common among all the moderns. And it cannot be conceived, that those notions, if true, should be overlooked, or always omitted by St. John, who is so careful to magnify his master Jesus Christ in every part of his history. And it highly deserves our consideration, that if the notions of an eternal generation and supernatural conception had been current, and commonly received among christians, when St. John wrote his gospel, and his epistles, that he should never

once take the least notice, or make the least mention of two such points, for the edification of those, among whom his writings were first received; who must have been highly offended at such an omission, if such notions had been articles, commonly received at that time, in their creed, or faith.

Hopton Haynes.

Erratum; in the article on Biblical Criticism in a few copies of our last Number,

For *ανηρ προφητας* read *ανερ προφητης*, *aner prophetes*.

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY DEFENDED, AND PRIEST-CRAFT EXPLODED.

(Continued from page 80.)

Sect. 4. *Pretensions to a divine call to the ministry—ordination—sacred character.*

THE points to be examined in this section are of considerable importance; in forming our views of them, it will be necessary to explain and state accurately, the sense in which we use certain words and expressions; as the loose application of them has produced much confusion, and the abuse of them led to many mistakes and corruptions in religion; the modes of expression referred to are such as stand at the head of this section.

1. It may either be admitted, or denied, that christian ministers have a divine call to their office and work, according to the sense in which the words, "divine call," are used. If by a divine call no more be meant, than that God, in the course of his providence, has qualified certain persons to act as religious teachers, disposed them to devote themselves to the office and work of the ministry, and brought them actually to engage in it, it is no doubt true that all the real ministers of Christ have such a divine call; but the words, divine call, are not the most proper to express what in that case they are used to express; for with as much propriety it might be said, that any other description of teachers, whether of law, or medicine, or philosophy, or of any branch of literature or science whatso-

ever, have a divine call to the office and work of teaching in which they are engaged ; as it must be allowed that God in his providence qualified them for, and brought them to engage in, their several offices as teachers ; nor can it be shown that there is anything supernatural in the call of religious teachers, more than in that of any other class of teachers. This, however, is not the sense in which a divine call to the work of the ministry is generally understood. Not only in the established, or state church, do those who are appointed to act as ministers, profess to be “ inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon them the office of the ministry ;” but, also among various other denominations persons profess to have a supernatural call to the ministry. Of the divine, or supernatural, call of the former, no proof is given, it rests on the mere assertion of the individual who cannot attain the office which he desires, or the honor, power and emolument connected with it, without making such an assertion : of the divine, or supernatural call of those who are not connected with the state religion and church, no proof has ever been produced ; it is concluded to take place, merely on the ground of the impulses and feelings of the persons who are anxious to be thought divinely called to the ministry, or the impulses and feelings of some other persons respecting them ; which in the estimation of reason and common sense, can be no proof at all. It is absurd to suppose that God ever called any man to an office and work for which he was not at all qualified, but many have professed to be divinely called to the work of the ministry, who, in the judgment of all impartial persons, must have appeared to be utterly unfit for it, being altogether destitute of the knowledge, piety, virtue, and also of the talents essentially necessary to qualify a man to be a true christian minister. Such persons must either have been self-deceived, or have been influenced by worldly motives. When the apostles had a divine call, a mission from heaven, and were supernaturally influenced and guided, they gave full proof of it in the miracles which God did by them ; and all who profess to have a divine call to the ministry, to receive their mission from God, in a direct way, ought to give similar proof of it ; and without

such proof, their pretensions must appear to be unfounded and false. They may say they are moved by the Holy Ghost, but all judicious and impartial persons will think they are moved by something else. As, according to the scriptures miraculous proofs always attended immediate divine calls to office, and divine missions, and no such proofs are now exhibited among any party of christians, it is just to conclude that all who now pretend to a divine call to the ministry, and a divine mission, are either self-deceived, or mean to impose on others by false pretences. Such pretensions to a divine call, and a divine mission, must be classed among the artifices of priestcraft, intended to bring the multitude to prostrate their understandings, and bow their necks to the yoke of ministerial and priestly domination.

It may be asked, How then is any man called to the christian ministry, and what is the proof of his being so called? It may be answered, In the same way as a man is called to any other office or employment, allowing for the different circumstances attending the introduction to the ministerial office and work. To be a little more particular. As God calls individuals to be civil magistrates, and rulers, and legislators, through the medium of the people among whom and for whom they are to act, so he calls others to act as ministers and christian pastors, through the medium of the congregations in which they are called to officiate; in the latter case, as well as the former, the voice of the people, when uttered agreeably to the New Testament, is the voice of God, the call of the congregation the call of God. Every congregation has a right to choose and call its own minister or ministers; but this choice and call can make him an official person only in the congregation which so chooses and calls him. But how are persons called to the ministry who are not chosen to office in any particular congregations? It is answered, God calls individuals to teach and preach his word to others by qualifying, disposing, and giving them the opportunity of doing it. This he does, not by any supernatural operation, but by the combined influence of circumstances in the course of his divine providence. There can be no better proof

of God's having called any one to perform any service for the good of others, than his qualifying, disposing, and giving him opportunity to do it. In another section, I intend showing that any man who understands the gospel, and is capable of preaching, has a right to preach it.

2. Various terms, by ecclesiastical usage, have acquired a sense very different from their true ideal meaning, and when employed in religious matters they are taken to import something very different from what is admitted to be their import when applied to other matters. Thus it has happened with respect to the words *ordain* and *ordination*. To ordain is to appoint, and ordination is appointment; but by ecclesiastical usage these words have acquired a very different meaning. Because when the apostles appointed persons to particular offices they laid their hands upon them to indicate the communication of miraculous gifts; therefore those who assist at the appointment, settlement, or ordination of a minister, (for the above words are of the same import) ape the apostles, and lay their hands on the head of the person ordained or appointed as a minister, though they know they have no spiritual or miraculous gifts to communicate, and acknowledge that for many centuries miraculous gifts have totally ceased; and this appendage to ordination in apostolic times, and which could be applicable to those times only, they make essential to ordination, if not the very thing itself. The appointment of the person who is already a minister, and is allowed to possess the character, knowledge, and talents, which the office and work require, to a particular station, they construe so far into the making him a minister, by their praying, and imposing their hands upon him, that without passing through this ceremonial, they contend that he ought neither to baptize nor administer the Lord's supper; and all this too among many dissenters, who acknowledge they have no spiritual gifts nor divine powers, nor indeed powers of any kind to communicate! Some may be disposed to call such a procedure a solemn farce; but on a close examination, it will be found not to be a mere farce, it will be discovered to have more than a little

priestcraft in it. Ordination is no longer regarded as the appointment of a minister to a particular office, or his settlement in that office ; but as a ceremonial calculated to separate the ordained person from his brethren, make him one of a privileged order, like the tribe of Levi among the Jews, and vest him with peculiar rights and prerogatives.

According to the most reputed orthodox views of ordination among dissenters, a christian congregation or church, (for the words are synonymous in their real meaning) cannot have a pastor unless he be regularly ordained ; and none but such a regularly ordained minister can lawfully administer what are called the ordinances, such as baptism, and in particular the Lord's supper ; and none can regularly ordain but those who have themselves been regularly ordained. This system of orthodox ordination completely establishes a distinct privileged order, a priesthood, which may properly be called the dissenting priesthood. It takes away the liberty and independence of the people, placing the congregations entirely in the hands of the formally ordained ministers, and making them dependent on this privileged order for pastors and ordinances. If a congregation be without a pastor, and the regularly ordained ministers refuse to assist them, or to ordain a pastor among them, either because they suspect them to be unsound in some of their opinions, or what they call irregular in their church order ; what are they to do ? either they must conform their opinions and proceedings to the standard and rule set up by the ordained pastors, or go without pastor and ordinances till they can find means to avert the displeasure of those who thus rule over the churches ; unless they can resolve to break off the yoke, and stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free. Is not this priestcraft, and religious domination ? Do not such ministers act the part of lords over God's heritage ? To the honor of the Unitarians they have freed themselves from this yoke of bondage, the plan of ordination which is inconsistent with the liberty and independence of churches has no existence among them.

It may be demanded of this dissenting priesthood, Who

gave them authority to ordain and make pastors? If the apostles had such authority, *they* have neither an apostolic mission, nor apostolic powers, nor are they successors of the apostles. They receive not this authority from the New Testament, consequently not from Jesus Christ. According to the New Testament each church has full power to choose and appoint its own officers, ministers among the rest, and to appoint is to ordain. This pretended power to ordain and make ministers, is evidently derived from the church of Rome, and can be traced to no other source. The first regularly ordained ministers (according to the orthodox notion) among dissenters, came out of the established church, and had been ordained while remaining in it: and the first regularly ordained ministers in the English established, or state church, came from the church of Rome, and had been ordained by the pope or his delegates. Their boasted power of ordaining and making ministers is derived from the mother of harlots, against whose corruptions and abominations they have made such an outcry, and it shows their relation to her. Let the chain of regular ordination be traced back link by link and it will lead us to Rome, nor if we follow it can we stop till we get there; but we hear the warning voice, "Come out of her O my people that ye be not partakers of her sins."

The having a public meeting, and public religious services, to which the ministers and members of neighboring congregations, may be invited, at the settlement of a minister with a congregation, at which the duties of both minister and people may be pointed out, and christian brotherhood promoted, is not at all inconsistent with the liberty and independence of either churches or individuals; while no authority is assumed by the ministers who attend, nor any unmeaning or superstitious ceremonies are practised; but this is not properly an ordination; but the religious and brotherly celebration of the settlement of a minister. The minister has been already ordained by the appointment of the people; and what is done at such a public meeting is the giving publicity to the solemn engagement entered into by the minister and his congregation,

and the religious solemnization of the commencement of their connection. Such meetings, on such interesting occasions, are calculated to answer many valuable ends; in particular to cherish and promote fellowship and brotherhood between neighboring ministers and churches, and to excite the public attention to the newly placed minister. On such occasions care should be taken that no countenance is given either to any thing which has the appearance of priestcraft, or superstition, or that is in the least inconsistent with religious liberty, equality and brotherhood. Such an occasion offers a fine opportunity for exposing the absurd, superstitious, and priestly notions which have been entertained of ordination, for pointing out the true nature and design of the christian ministry, and for attacking religious tyranny, and domination in matters of faith and conscience. The meeting and public services here recommended, on the settlement of a minister, is that of ministers and people, as brethren and fellow servants, all engaged in the same glorious cause; to strengthen and encourage each other in the work of the Lord; to excite an increase of christian zeal, and promote mutual love. There should be no confession of faith, no imposition of hands; the shadow of a priest should not be seen, nor the tail of the Genevean cloak: the entertainment should be on such a plan that the poorest brother may participate: it should not be like the pope and his cardinals, nor Martin Luther and the German princes; but like Jesus with the fishermen and mechanics, and the women who followed him from Galilee.

3. On the ground of a supposed divine call, and the imagined virtue and mysterious effects of ordination, or for some other undefined cause, a sacred character has been claimed by the professed minister of Jesus Christ. I have heard this claim more frequently asserted in Scotland than in England: but could never learn wherein it consists. If, as has been shown, the pretension to a divine call be unfounded and false, and if ordination be an unmeaning, or superstitious ceremony, the claim of a sacred character has nothing to support it. Could this claim, which was not set up by the apostles and first

ministers of the word, be fully established, it would prove that ministers are indeed a distinct privileged order; but what then would become of the words of Jesus, that his disciples are all brethren? In what does this sacred character consist? Who can answer this question? The New Testament is silent on the subject. Is it not like the red lettered saintship of the names which adorn the Romish calendar? Is it not intended to shroud from view what would not bear public exposure? Do the claimants mean to say that the doctrines they profess are too sacred to be brought to the test of reason, and strict scrutiny? Or that their religious ceremonies are too sacred to be subjected to the ordeal of rational examination in the blaze of gospel light? Or that their proceedings in religion are too sacred to be brought to the standard which Jesus and his apostles set up, to be submitted to a comparison with the example which he and they have left? Or do they mean that a regard to the sacredness of their office and authority should lead men to prostrate their understandings before them, and to submit implicitly to their dogmas and dictates? Be these things as they may, the eyes of men are too far opened for them to be much longer hood-winked, by the unauthorized claims of their pretended spiritual guides. The sacred character of a child of the dust! of a creature of yesterday, a compound of weakness and ignorance, who to-morrow may be food for worms! Is this the humility which the gospel teaches?

The true disciple, the faithful minister of Christ, will regard the doctrine and precepts of his master as sacred, but he will arrogate nothing sacred to himself.

R. WRIGHT.

REMARKS ON RESTRICTOR'S PLAN FOR AN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION IN HIS DISSENTER, No. I.

To the Editors of the Christian Reflector.

GENTLEMEN,

Your Correspondent "Restrictor," will I think give an humble individual credit, for friendly motives in offering

to his consideration, a few cursory Remarks upon the Plan of an Unitarian Association, which he has suggested in No. 56, page 80, of your useful Publication.

We are members of the same religious sect, and no doubt shall cordially congratulate each other, with the sincerest pleasure on the extension, the universal adoption, and the happy influence of Unitarianism. For these very interesting purposes, an association of our congregations, and an amicable bond of union, are objects of high consideration. And if formed upon a basis commensurate to their importance, and emanating from a principle, acceptable, inviting and encouraging to ministers and congregations, they would methinks meet with a gratifying patronage, and be respected and applauded by posterity.

But though I approve of an association, I do not feel satisfied with Restrictor's arrangement, and apprehending he has started with a proposition that would defeat his scheme, beg to submit my thoughts on the subject to his consideration. I shall be truly happy if any suggestions I may lay before him shall enable him to make his plan more palatable and efficacious.

"The first part of the plan," he informs us, "is to have an association of the congregations in every hundred of the county, to meet once a quarter."—"Three delegates to be sent to every quarterly meeting, one of whom to be the minister."

To this arrangement, I am confident the ministers of our connection (as indeed the ministers of any connection) would strongly object, and if it were adopted, would very naturally decline co-operation, from its throwing the preponderance of power into the hands of the people, and subjecting themselves to a potent opposition, and an inimical combination. Let the power be fairly poised, and I flatter myself, a plan, so congenial to their best wishes, and so helpful to their arduous labors, would meet with their cordial concurrence and patronage.

And moreover, this diminution of the proposed delegates, would be a saving to the funds, without any sacrifice of anticipated benefit. For in case of unavoidable detention, either the minister, or the congregational representative, might send a deputy, to any of the meetings of the delegates, charged

with instructions agreeable to himself. So that in this extreme case, the interests of every congregation would be duly respected ; and the wishes of every minister would be gratified.

It is much to be wished, that Restrictor, had taken a lower scale, for his assumed calculations of the members of our congregations.

In his estimate of the few congregations in the hundred of West Derby, which he has named, he has indulged in round numbers, to an astonishing extent. If he be accurate in one or two instances ; yet in the other specifications he has much overshot the mark. The actual numbers of the two last named congregations, even though we include all the little masters and misses belonging to them, are nearly tripled by his magic wand. Now though we have no objection to appear in print in respectable numbers, and rejoice that in many stations, our numbers, are upon the rapid increase ; yet we do not wish to be pompously exaggerated ; and unnecessarily exposed to the banters of vaunting sectaries, who measure truth by numbers.

Nor is this the only evil, that is likely to arise, to the proposed plan, from inaccuracy of numerical calculation. It will be followed up by a most serious disappointment in the assumed receipts, from the penny a week subscriptions, by which this plan is to be supported. That subscription I presume is to be voluntary and optional, and not a peremptory condition of congregational membership ? If it be made peremptory, it will be very unpopular, and if left optional, large allowances must be made for the tastes, dispositions and resolves of the members.

Restrictor, will pardon us for watching with an anxious eye, the operations of a plan, which if it be matured, will involve in its results, a concern no less important, than the perfect and uninterrupted unanimity, and the hearty co-operation of christian ministers, and the people of their solemn charge, or the serious and much to be deprecated rupture of that sacred and momentous connection.

If any principles are admitted at its formation ; or are permitted to creep in at any subsequent period, which would lead

to a misunderstanding between these constituent parts of a religious society; such an inauspicious association, would be a curse; not a blessing to the sacred cause.

Let us then act upon the simple maxim, "begin well, that ye may go on prosperously; and have reason for unceasing congratulation."

Yours sincerely,

MODERATOR.

TRINITARIANISM INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE LORD'S PRAYER

To the Editors of the Christian Reflector.

GENTLEMEN,

Having been educated in the Trinitarian doctrine, I was perfectly aware of its delusive infatuating tendency. I knew full well, or at least my own experience had taught me, that when it had once taken possession of the mind, almost every thing that afforded the least scope for the imagination, was transformed into a trinity; even the warnings of the ghostly visitants of the midnight hour, denoted a trinity; and the dreams portentous of some direful event, were thrice repeated in honor of this sublime mystery.

But I was not prepared to expect that any argument could be adduced in its support, from our Lord's plain and simple, but incomparable prayer. I had thought, that this beautiful formulary or model, was at least silent on the subject; though I might have perceived, had not my faculties been lulled to sleep by the stupifying influence of this supposed mystery, that it taught a system directly the reverse. It recognizes only *one* object of the christian's worship, and this object is *the Father*. There is not the most distant allusion to either God the Son, or God the Holy Ghost; or to any thing at all resembling such a notion, as trinity in unity, and unity in trinity.

But Dr. Adam Clarke, however, appears to think differently.

He can see, or he permits some one to see *for him*, all the three supposed persons in the trinity, in this model of the christian's addresses to the throne of grace.

Commenting on the words, Matt. vi. 10, "as it is in heaven;" he says, "some see the mystery of the trinity in the three preceding petitions. The first being addressed to the *Father*, as the source of all holiness. The second to the *Son*, who establishes the kingdom of God upon the earth. The third to the *Holy Spirit*, who by his energy works in men to will and to perform."

Here, the doctor takes the liberty to *add* the *Son* and the *Holy Spirit*, to make up, with the *Father*, the three supposed persons in the godhead. The prayer as it came from the lips of Jesus, is strictly a *Unitarian* prayer; but to suffer it to *remain* so would be fatal to the Trinitarian doctrine. It must therefore be remodeled and patched up with the *additions* of men, to make it complete. It must be *transformed* into a *Trinitarian* prayer, at all events: and the *deficiencies* of him who "spoke the words of God," must be supplied by the *superior* wisdom of his frail and erring disciples!

The Eclectic Review, however, takes a different and an opposite cause. Both wish to get quit of an insuperable difficulty; but while the one is laboring to build up, the other is laboring to pull down.

The passage to which I allude, is of long standing. It will be found in the Review for March, 1817, p. 259, and is as follows.

"However susceptible it (the Lord's prayer) may be of a *christian explanation*, yet certainly prayers strictly formed on that model would be considered by all *orthodox christians as extremely deficient*. It was not intended to anticipate the light of the dispensation of the Spirit, and *strictly speaking it is a Jewish prayer*, adapted to the time and circumstances, but by no means an adequate exhibition of the *principle* of christian devotion. It does not contain one recognition of the medium of acceptance, nor in short of any doctrine peculiarly christian: it is materially deficient as a christian

prayer on the doctrine of the spirit's influence, which is one of the distinguishing tenets of the gospel dispensation."

Thus, while Dr. Adam Clarke, by the additions of men, would transform the Lord's prayer into a Trinitarian prayer; the Eclectic Review would set it aside as not "containing any doctrine peculiarly christian!" If Unitarians were to take such unwarrantable liberties with the scriptures, what a hue and cry would be raised against them, for their presumption and blasphemy! But Trinitarians might possess the enviable prerogative of "doing no wrong." Every thing must give way to their system; even the words of Christ, and the authority of Christ; though both the one and the other were derived from God. "He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me." Matt. x. 40.

Captain Gifford, in his Remonstrance to the Bishop of St. David's, has so pertinent a question on the subject, that I cannot forbear adding it to the preceding remarks.

"Since Christ," says he, "that is according to your system, God himself, condescended to give us a complete form of prayer, expressly for the purpose of teaching us how to pray to God—if the doctrine contained in the Athanasian creed be absolutely necessary to salvation, how do you account for his having, on the most particular and important occasions, entirely omitted to make any mention of it whatsoever? and if our everlasting condemnation, notwithstanding, await our neglect to glorify the trinity, then has not the Almighty himself given us an imperfect prayer?"

In fact, it can never be reconciled to the Trinitarian system; or the Trinitarian system can never be reconciled to it; and so long as it remains upon record, it will be an indubitable proof, that Trinitarianism is *false*. K.

P. S. I am glad that your half Unitarian, and half Trinitarian correspondent, G. W. V. has been so ably answered. His "*may be right*" principle would excite a smile, did it not produce a more painful feeling, from the recollection of its pernicious influence upon the human mind. Were it carried

to its consequences it would neutralize every manly and noble sentiment, and lead to universal conformity in the journey through life.

“ ‘It *may* be right’ to worship a wafer-god, or a baby god, or a dumb reptile-god.” It is a sort of comfortable scepticism; which many, I am afraid, cherish for its convenience, in a worldly point of view. But “whatsoever is not of faith (or of principle) is sin.” Rom. xiv. 23.

To the Editors of the Christian Reflector.

GENTLEMEN,

The paucity of our Sunday-school books has for some time been a subject of regret to many who have been earnestly engaged in the education of youth on the Lord's day. It is not possible in many of our country schools and dependent situations, to furnish a school with suitable books, while those in more affluent circumstances, feel not so much the inconvenience, or feeling it, can apply a remedy as far as respects themselves. Let any one but take a look into our Sunday schools, and he will find in one place a school with appropriate books and an adequate sufficiency, in another scarcely one twentieth part of what is necessary, and probably the latter might be productive of the greater good, but for such an insurmountable obstacle. That such is the *fact* I think must be admitted, yet it is impossible to describe how far such inconvenience operates injuriously. Why is it that such obstacles as the one before mentioned, and others as important, are suffered to exist? Is it not because those who feel the inconvenience the most, have the least influence in carrying any thing into effect amongst us? If the means of eradicating such evils are in our possession, what is it but an unpardonable breach of duty not to make use of them? With your permission Mr. Editor, I will suggest to your numerous readers, and particularly those who possess the necessary influence amongst us, some observations which might, if acted upon, greatly lessen, if not totally annihilate, the evil complained of. The remedy is this: to unite the separate funds and form a plan that they may be brought to act in concert with each other. In explaining, I will assume that there are about 3500 Sunday scholars of our denomination in Lancashire,* and also that these upon an average cost nine pence each in books annually, making a total of 1317. 5s. Supposing that book will continue fit for use for five years, the amount for that time will be 6507. 5s. Suppose then that a book of 140 pages be wanted of any description for the above use, the expence of

* See the Rev. George Harris's Sermon preached at Bury.

3500 copies would be in sheets about forty pounds, to which add fifty more for binding, † will be ninety pounds. Four times this quantity in appropriate books would furnish our schools with books in much more ample manner than they have hitherto been, and the expence upon such supposition would be 360*l.* or a saving of 298*l.* in five years. At the same time it should be borne in mind that should the plan include other counties besides Lancashire, the expence would be still less, and prove with great force that *union is strength*. Materials for such books might be forwarded from any one free of expence to a committee appointed to receive, inspect, reject, arrange, such as to them might be considered best adapted to the purpose intended. These books might be published by subscription, and form a separate association, or be attached to our Tract Societies, from whence each school might receive such books as would best suit their circumstances, by an annual subscription thereto. If there is any impracticability in the above plan, I should be glad to see it pointed out, that a remedy might be suggested. I imagine I have not stated to its extent the pecuniary advantage, and the advantage in operation would be incalculable. Whether these remarks are of use or otherwise does not rest with

JUNIUS.

† We conceive our correspondent labors under some mistake in his calculation; as the paper for such a book as he mentions, would cost at least fifty pounds without the expence of printing. Something like accuracy should be aimed at, or societies as well as individuals may be led into a serious error.—EDITORS.

QUESTIONS

Submitted to the attention of the Advocates of the popular doctrine of the Atonement, or Satisfaction for Sin.

ACCORDING to the Doctrine of Atonement, the salvation of man was bought, bargained, or contracted for. In circumstances of this nature four points are essential.

1. What is the thing bought?
2. What was the price paid?
3. To what class of beings did he belong, who made the purchase?
4. Of whom was the purchase made?
5. Did Christ come into the world to appease the *wrath* of God, or in consequence of the love of God? John iii. 16. Acts iii. 26.
6. What party received the Atonement, (reconciliation) God or man? Rom. v. 10. 2 Cor. v. 18, 19. Col. i. 20. 21.
7. In the only passage in the New Testament in which the

word *atonement* occurs, is it affirmed that God received it, or that we received it? Rom. v. 11.

8 Were the sacrifices under the Mosaic law, vicarious and typical? If not, how could they be types of a vicarious sacrifice, and what part of scripture countenances this doctrine?

9. In the parable of the prodigal son, (a beautiful illustration of the mercy of God, to returning penitents) is there a shadow of proof in support of the doctrine of vicarious satisfaction for sins?

10. We are told that Christ as God-Man, made that infinite satisfaction for sin, which infinite justice required. Did then the Godhead die?

11. If the Godhead cannot suffer or die, was it not the human nature of Christ, (i. e. human merits) which afforded all the satisfaction really made?

12. If God cannot die (and who will affirm it) an infinite satisfaction was not made; or Christ who died, was not God. If this be allowed: how could a finite being make that infinite satisfaction, which the doctrine of the atonement considers necessary?

13. As the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost constitute *one* God, how does it happen, that no vicarious sacrifice is offered to the Son and to the Holy Ghost?

14. If three persons make one God, it appears that only one third of the Deity was satisfied. Does not this necessarily involve the idea of clashing and jarring in the principles of his character, being at once vindictive and merciful—a God of inexorable anger, and a God of unbounded love?

The Caterer,

No. XVII.

"Plinius major dicere solebat, nullum esse librum tam malum, ut non aliquâ parte posset prodesse."

David Levi, a Jew, and the Rev. W. Romaine, a Tritheist.

MR. ROMAINE in his "Practical Commentary," brings the same charge against the Jews, which is generally brought against Unitarian Christians. He says "They (the Jews) are now without a God, because they have rejected the true God, the blessed Trinity of their fathers, and worship they know not what. They have set up some strange kind of an infinitely extended metaphysical Being, whom they call the one supreme God, and who never had any existence, but what the enemies of christianity have been pleased to give him."

Levi says, that it was foretold by Moses, more than 3000

years ago, that the name of the God of Israel, would be profaned among the nations, (see Deut. xxxii 37, 38) and proceeds; "That the Jews are upbraided at this day with having no God, because, they worship the ONE supreme God; because, they worship the God of their fathers; the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the God of Moses, to whom he declared himself by the name of I AM; the God described in the law and the prophets, *as the only living and true God*; that pure UNITY so strongly inculcated in the Mosaical dispensation, &c. And for which, they have suffered such dreadful persecutions and massacres; for which, such torrents of their blood have flowed; and yet, we see with what exactness it hath been fulfilled.

"In Deut. xxxii. 39. Moses, by a most beautiful figure shews, that, when the nations shall thus have profaned the name of the Lord of Hosts, that God will be jealous for his name's sake; and when he comes to punish them for their blasphemy, will say, 'See now that I, *even I, am he*, and there is no God with me.' I am he unto whom the children of Israel offered their sacrifices, and I am the same now; for I am the Lord, I change not; neither is there any God with me: no plurality of persons, as ye said; no *Aleim*; no Trinity in Unity; but a perfect, pure UNITY."

"It is really worthy of remark," adds Levi in a note "that Moses does not make use of the noun *Al*, as in verse 12th; but *Aleim*, which the christians say denotes a plurality of persons in the Godhead, or a Trinity in Unity: he therefore in order to explode that corrupt and pernicious doctrine, makes use of the noun *Aleim*, as if he had said, that plurality which ye attributed to the noun *Aleim*, hath no existence with me, for I am a pure UNITY.

Windoos Superstition.

A Letter from Poonah, dated 29th September last, gives the following horrid account of a Suttee:

"THE unfortunate Brahminess of her own accord had ascended the funeral pile of her husband's bones (for he had died at a distance,) but finding the torture of the fire more than she could bear, by a violent struggle she threw herself from the flames, and tottering to a short distance, fell down. Some gentlemen who were present immediately plunged her into the river, which was close by; and thereby saved her from being much burnt. She retained her senses completely, and complained of the badness of the pile, which she said consumed her so slowly that she could not bear it, but expressed her willingness to again try it, if they would improve it; they would not do so, and the poor creature shrunk with dread from the flames, which were now burning most intensely, and refused to go on. When the inhuman relations saw this, they took her by the head and heels and threw her on the fire, and held her there till they were driven away by the heat; they also took up large blocks of wood with which they struck her, in order to deprive her of

her senses, but she again made her escape, and without any help ran directly into the river. The people of her house followed her here, and tried to drown her by pressing her under the water; but a gentleman who was present rescued her from them, and she immediately ran into his arms, and cried to him to save her. I arrived at the ground as they were bringing her the second time from the river, and I cannot describe to you the horror I felt on seeing the mangled condition she was in; almost every inch of skin on her body had been burned off, her legs and thighs, her arms and back were completely raw, her breasts were dreadfully torn, and the skin hanging from them in shreds, the skin and nails of her fingers had peeled wholly off, and were hanging to the back of her hands. In fact, I never saw or even read of so entire a picture of human misery as this poor woman displayed. She seemed to dread being taken to the fire, and cried out to the 'Acha Sahib,' (good sirs) as she feelingly denominated them, to save her. Her friends seemed no longer inclined to force her, and one of her relations, at our instigation, sat down beside her, and gave her some clothes, and told her they would not. She was sent to the hospital, where every medical assistance was given her; she lingered in the most excruciating pain for about twenty hours, and then died."

Religious Intelligence.

WE are sure many of our readers will be particularly gratified on learning that the Unitarian Church at Pittsburg, United States, North America, was opened on Sunday, the 19th October last. The services of the day were conducted by the Rev. John Campbell, the pastor of the congregation; and by the Rev. James Kay, of Northumberland Town. The audiences were very numerous, very many persons being unable to obtain admittance.

The Second Anniversary of the Unitarian Christian Congregation assembling in the Meeting-house, Moor Lane, Bolton, was held on Sunday and Monday, April 18th and 19th. Friends were present from most of the towns and villages in the district. We have pleasure in stating that the following ministers were also present: the Revds. W. J. Fox, of London; J. G. Robberds, of Manchester; R. Astley, of Halifax; R. Cree, of Preston; J. Ragland, of Hindley; F. Knowles, of Park Lane; E. R. Dimock, of Warrington; H. Clarke, of Haslingden; J. Ashworth, Newchurch; J. W. Morris, of Dean Row; W. Stevens, of Todmorden; W. Duffield, of Salford; and Mr. W. Boardman, of Swinton, and what are called the *lay* preachers of Manchester. In the morning and evening of Sunday, the Rev. W. J. Fox preached two most admirable and eloquent sermons. The Rev. George Harris preached in the afternoon, and the Rev. J. G. Robberds delivered a most masterly exposure of the doctrine of the two natures of Christ, on the Monday night. The congregations were numerous.

On the Monday more than 250 persons male and female sat down to dinner, the Rev. George Harris in the chair; which number was increased after dinner to 400. Addresses were delivered by Messrs. Fox, Robberds, Dimock, Johnson, of Carlisle; Ragland, Remnall, of Park Lane, Makin, Brandreth, Clarke, and the Chairman.

On Tuesday, the children educated in the Sunday schools belonging to the congregation, and the singers, and many of the parents, amounting to more than 200 people, dined in the Cloth Hall, Mr. Harris in the chair. They were addressed by Mr. Robberds and Mr. Fox in speeches which must have made a deep impression on the minds of all who heard them. The collections during the religious services exceeded NINETY POUNDS.

The debt incurred by the congregation in purchasing and fitting up the Meeting-house, *is now entirely liquidated*. Such an instance of united, of disinterested zeal, accomplishing its objects in so short a period as two years, has hitherto been unknown to the Unitarian denomination. It proves the people's power, if the people can only be induced to exercise it. It is the triumph of consistency, and firmness, and perseverance. Soon may the example induce others to labor diligently in the good work of christian reformation. And may the congregation show by the continued moral rectitude of the principles on which they were founded and have acted, that they are deserving of the aid they have received from their friends, and may their society remain a monument of faithfulness to generations yet to come.

The following sentiment was received at the dinner with unanimous approbation: "The Unitarian Ministers of Lancashire and Cheshire, and may we have the pleasure of seeing them here at our next anniversary."

Selected Poetry.

(From Bowring's *Matins and Vespers*.)

1 CORINTHIANS, CHAPTER XIII.

THO' every tongue that man e'er uttered, broke
 From my all-eloquent lips—and tho' I spoke
 The languages of angels,—if my soul
 Were not attuned to love's sweet music, all,
 All were a hollow sound—an idle voice,
 A bell's dull tinkling, or a cymbal's noise.

Tho' I could read the books of prophecy;
 Withdraw the veil of heavenly mystery;
 Tho' Science led me thro' her various way,
 And I had power, power from above, to say,
 'Remove, thou mountain!' this were nought, and I
 An useless nothing, without Charity.

Tho' thousand wretches crowded round my door,
 Relieved, protected by my generous store,—
 Tho' neither flame nor sword could shake my faith
 A martyr towering o'er the fear of death,—
 I were no offering worthy of above,
 Unless supported and impelled by Love.

Love is long-suffering, generous, candid; free
 From envy, pride, and self-complacency.
 Benignant and beneficent and mild,
 Pure-hearted and confiding as a child,
 She mourns the ravages of vice—but sees
 With holy joy Truth's glorious victories.
 All things she bears, with hero-courage bears,
 And trusts to heaven her pleasures and her cares;
 And hopes that all things hasten on to bliss,
 And all endures, with such sweet hopes as this.

She never fails—the prophet's sacred tongue
 Shall by the hand of ages be unstrung;
 The wonder-working gifts of heaven shall cease,
 And knowledge perish in forgetfulness;
 But soon shall better prospects dawn—the ray
 Of twilight brightens into perfect day,
 And weakness, weariness, and gloom and night,
 Give way to beauty, strength, and joy, and light.
 Even as a child in early opening hours
 Totters and trips, and plies his little powers,
 From his young lips imperfect accents break,
 His thoughts are wandering and his judgment weak;
 Yet as his years flow on, intelligence
 Glows in his mind, and winning eloquence
 Flows from his tongue; he stands erect, and can
 Glory in all the pride and power of man:—
 So do we journey heavenwards—children here,
 But we shall grow to man's perfection *there*.

Our earthly vision is but dark and dim:
There shall we see, in the pure light of Him
 Who is all brightness;—every mist disperse
 That mantles now the gloomy universe;
 All perils past, all tears, all terrors o'er,
 And doubt distress, and hope delude, no more.

There are these angels sent by heaven to guide
 Our earthly barks thro' time's deceitful tide:
 Faith, Hope, and Charity—benignant three!
 Charity fairest—follow Charity!

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Homo's Remarks did not reach us in time. *Senex* on the Atonement is necessarily deferred till the next month. Several other papers are under consideration.

F. B. Wright, Printer, Castle Street, Liverpool.

The Christian Reflector,

AND THEOLOGICAL INQUIRER.

"I speak as unto wise men; judge ye what I say." PAUL.

No. 58. LIVERPOOL, JUNE 1st, 1824. Price 4½d

BIBLICAL CRITICISM.

We copy the following excellent remarks from a little work which deserves to be extensively and attentively read by all denominations of christians. It is entitled, "*An Appeal to Scripture and Tradition in defence of the Unitarian Faith.*" Sold by Hunter, London.

ROMANS IX. 5.

Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

As the ancient copies of the Gospels were not pointed, the pauses must be regulated by the sense. The charge of altering the punctuation, in order to make the text conform with a system, is therefore absurd. The received pointing is suspicious, because, notwithstanding the obstinacy of Trinitarian writers in defending it, the most obvious grammatical construction is at variance with it.

In the English version the position of the original words is changed, in order to bring Christ into closer apparent connection with the latter clause of the sentence. The literal version would run thus: "*Whose are the Fathers and of whom was the Christ according to the flesh.*"

The words rendered *who is* are in the original $\delta \omega \nu$. The Greek article δ is often used as a relative, especially by Homer; but as the apostle had used the proper relative $\circ \varsigma$, three times before this passage, in reference to the Israelites, he might have been expected to write $\circ \varsigma \epsilon \sigma \tau \iota \nu$, and not $\delta \omega \nu$, in case he intended Christ as the antecedent; and this relative he actually does use in reference to Christ, in Col. i. 15; $\circ \varsigma \epsilon \sigma \tau \iota \nu \epsilon \iota \kappa \omega \nu \tau \epsilon$

Θεοῦ, *who is* the image of *the* God, or God. But further, when the article *ὁ* is connected with a participle, it does not mean *who*, but *he* who; as *ὁ φιλῶν*—he who loves; or the person loving: *ὁ ὢν* is therefore “he who is” or the person being; “he who is over all” or “the *one* that is over all,” easily connects with the following substantive, God; and that such is the proper connection, independently of grammatical reasons, appears from corroborative scripture evidence, that this is the peculiar distinctive title of the most high God, the Father. Ephes. iv. 5, 6: “One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all.” Or, the one that is above all: *ὁ ἐπὶ πάντων*.

“The blessed,” and “blessed for ever,” is also the distinctive character, or title of the most high God; Christ being distinguished only (as in Mark xiv. 61) by the appellation, “Son of the blessed.”

Romans i. 25: “Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.” Or if this be questioned as inconclusive, from the erroneous confounding of Christ, the Gospel creator, with the Creator of heaven and earth, we may refer to 2 Cor. xi. 31: “The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not:”—where the same words, *ὁ ὢν*, *the one that is*, are used. The English reader is not aware that the inflexion of cases in the original makes it impossible that there should be any ambiguity in the application of this title to the God and Father; though, as much in the Trinitarian scheme depends on the placing of words, this title would be vindicated to Christ instead of to God, if there were sufficient grammatical authority to favour the attempt. A literal version as to position will obviate all ambiguity.

“The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ knoweth, he who is blessed for ever, that I lie not.”

The same title occurs in doxologies, or ascriptions of glory, to the Father, God. It is indeed made an objection to the considering the passage in question as a doxology, though it

has the characteristic annexation of Amen, that it is necessary to supply the ellipsis of the verb substantive. Yet the same apostle, using the same term of blessing, adopts the same ellipsis. 2 Cor. i. 3: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." And Peter: 1 Pet. i. 3: "Blessed *be* God even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." From the circumstance of blessed being the first word in these sentences, it is urged that the passage under consideration cannot be a doxology to the Father. But there are two obvious reasons for the different positions of the words. God is here accompanied with an epithet; and blessed with a term of endless duration. Now, "He who is over all, God," has more of titular emphasis, when placed first in the sentence, than if the words ran "blessed be God, he, who is over all;" and as the term blessed cannot be disjoined from the words *for ever*, which most emphatically close the sentence, it is of necessity placed towards the end. The propriety of this arrangement will appear evident, if the words be read in the sequence for which the objectors contend: "Blessed for ever be God, who is over all. Amen."

The passage, then, restored to its just coherence, will run thus: "Whose are the Fathers, and of whom was the Christ according to the flesh: he who is over all, God, or God who is over all, be blessed for ever. Amen." This "troublesome passage for Unitarians" was thus understood by Bucer and Erasmus, who were both Trinitarians.

As nothing is too trifling for the support of the Trinitarian scheme, it is proper to notice that *according to the flesh* are words thought decisive of the incarnation of a superior nature in Christ; yet the phrase is repeatedly used by the Jewish writers in relation to natural descent or consanguinity; or in a human sense opposed to a spiritual. Thus Paul: Rom. ix. 3. "My kinsman according to the flesh." Hebrews xii. 9, "We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?" Ephes. vi. 5, "Servants, be obedient to your masters according to the flesh." Christ was the son of David by human descent; the son of God by adoption.—*Appeal, &c. pp. 22-25.*

THE CRUEL AND UNNATURAL FATHER.

IN a certain country, there lived a man who had a numerous family. His possessions were immense; the situation where he resided was beautiful in the extreme; and if he had possessed dispositions of a kind and amiable nature, he might have diffused happiness to all around. But he was distinguished by a gloomy austerity of character, that rendered him an object of aversion and dread.

It happened, that one of his sons committed a serious offence against his authority. The father's wrath was immediately kindled. It knew no bounds or reason. Indignation shot, like fiery darts, from his revengeful countenance. He was determined to inflict summary punishment on the hapless offender; and not merely on the offender himself, but upon all his children alike. They were all, he said, equally guilty; and he would visit their disobedience and transgression, with an equal degree of punishment.

It was in vain that they said they were not present, and could therefore, take no part in the offence which had been committed. The father was inexorable as the flinty rock; and he was resolved, he said, to punish his disobedient and rebellious children, with the utmost severity that he could inflict. Nay, he would also punish their offspring, if he lived to see them; and their offspring's offspring, too, should his existence be protracted to such a period. He would consign them all to utter darkness, and inconceivable torments, during the whole of their lives. They should see no light, they should taste no joy, they should experience no ease for ever; but should suffer, without the least intermission, the most excruciating pangs of misery, till they could suffer no more.

One of his sons stepped forward, to intercede with his father, in behalf of his brethren. He had been the greatest favorite with the father; and was truly, in his disposition and character, the most amiable of the family circle. With a generosity unparalleled, he offered to become their substitute. He would be the only guilty creature before his father; and would suffer, in his own person all the punishment which the father intended to inflict on his unfortunate children; provided, he would turn away his wrath, and be reconciled to them. He begged that he might become a sacrifice for them; that he might pour forth his blood, and devote himself to death,—if that would appease his father's anger, and propitiate his mercy.

The proposal was accepted with an eagerness, which malignity is wont to display. It seemed as if the father delighted in the idea, of immolating his most amiable son; as if he thirsted to drink the vital current that flowed in his pure veins.

The innocent victim stood forth cool and undismayed; and,

baring his bosom with a smile of serenity, the father plunged the fatal dagger into his vitals, and he fell lifeless at his feet.

All, they now thought was buried in oblivion. The price which had been given to purchase peace and reconciliation, was of such a nature, as to disarm every feeling of indignation and wrath; and they implored the forgiveness which the father had promised, for the sake of his once favorite son. But most of them, alas! implored it in vain. For they learned, to their utter consternation, that their father had long since formed an arbitrary and irreversible determination; merely to select a few, about one-fourth, of his children to his peculiar favor, and consign the rest to inconceivable misery, during their natural lives; and this too without any regard to merit on the other; but merely for his own good pleasure, and to exercise his parental authority. Thus, the greater portion of them were doomed to unutterable misery through the whole of their lives.

Explanation.

According to the doctrine of reputed orthodoxy, the father, above described, is the universal Father; the children, are all mankind; the son who committed the offence, Adam, the progenitor of the human race; and the son who offered himself as a sacrifice, to appease the Father's anger, Jesus Christ, the Son of God!!! For according to this doctrine, we are told, that, in consequence of the sin of Adam, all mankind fell under the curse of God to all eternity. But Jesus Christ stepped forward and offered to become a sacrifice in their place and stead; to take upon himself all their sins, and suffer, as their substitute, all the punishment which they deserved; that he might reconcile God to his creatures, and appease his anger; yet, notwithstanding, that Jesus died as a sacrifice for the sins of all mankind, only a few are to be benefited by the sacrifice which he is said to have made; for before the foundation of the world, God elected a certain number to everlasting glory, and ordained the rest to dishonor and wrath, to the praise of his vindictive justice.

Such is the character of reputed orthodoxy! Such the representation which it gives of that great and good Being, who is the common Father of us all, and who is emphatically denominated **THE GOD OF LOVE!**

"An eminent Pagan writer," says Mr. Addison (*Spec. No. 494*) "has made a discourse to shew that the Atheist, who denies a God, does him less dishonor than the man who owes his being, but who at the same time believes him to be cruel, hard to please, and terrible to human nature. 'For my own part,' says he, 'I would rather it should be said of me, that there never was such a man as Plutarch, than that Plutarch was ill-natured, capricious, or inhuman.'"

"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear,"

K.

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY DEFENDED, AND PRIEST-CRAFT EXPLODED.

(Continued from page 108.)

Sect. 5. The cure of souls—All who understand the Gospel may preach it—Education for the Ministry.

It is not easy fully to explain, and account for the introduction of, all the technical terms which are used in religion, and applied to the character and work of what has been called the "christian priesthood." It certainly would have been much better for christians to have contented themselves with such language as the scriptures supply, and as is on a level with the common sense of mankind, when speaking of christianity, and the christian ministry: and it is reasonable to think scriptural language would have satisfied them, and have been thought sufficient to express their views, had those views been purely scriptural. When unscriptural language, and modes of expression not easy to understand, are adopted, and deemed necessary to express what is insisted on as a part of the christian religion, there is reason to suspect a departure from the simplicity and purity of the gospel, the introduction of something dissonant to the New Testament, and which requires to be kept a little in obscurity, as too much light might prove unfavorable to its credit. So far as christians can be brought to believe, that nothing can be a part of christianity but what can be expressed in the words of Jesus and his apostles, and to act consistently with that belief, an important point is gained, and the necessary work of reformation may be expected to go on.

1. *The cure of souls*, is one of those unscriptural terms of expression which have been employed to describe the office and work of the supposed christian priesthood. It is not easy to fix the meaning of this expression, nor to show how it originated and came into use. It is likely it came, with many other absurdities and superstitious notions and usages, from the ancient heathen, among whom the *Curio* seems to have been somewhat analogous to what among christians is called the

parish priest. Be this as it may, the cure of souls is no where in the New Testament mentioned as the office and work of a christian minister. The pastor of a church no doubt engages in a most important office, undertakes a most solemn charge, and his work is both arduous and deeply interesting. He cannot be too deeply impressed with a sense of the responsibility he is under to God for the manner in which he acquits himself in his office, and performs his work; nor can he devote himself with too much zeal, diligence, faithfulness and perseverance to the studies and labors of a minister and pastor. He should use all possible means to acquaint himself with the moral and spiritual wants of the people among whom he ministers; he should labor incessantly to supply those wants; to instruct, edify and comfort all descriptions of persons in his congregation; to form the minds of the children and youth to piety, virtue and goodness; to instruct the ignorant, and lead those who err in the way of truth; to reform the vicious; to promote the salvation of mankind around him; to console and comfort all who are in distress, trouble and affliction; in a word, it should be the object of all his studies and labors, in which he should be unwearied, to promote the true knowledge, spirit and practice of pure christianity, by preaching, conversation, example, and in every possible way, taking his great master for his pattern, constantly following in his steps. He should live and act as in the presence and under the eye of his God, and as feeling that he is accountable to him for the use he makes of his gifts, talents, attainments, time, and the manner in which he acquits himself in every part of his office and work. His work should be his delight, the success of his labors esteemed their best reward, and the improvement of the people among whom he labors, in knowledge, piety, virtue and goodness, his greatest joy. Such, in brief, will the good minister of Jesus Christ be. An idle, careless, worldly-minded, or vain, ostentatious, or proud, lordly, or selfish, or intemperate, or under any view immoral minister, is to be ranked among the most odious characters, and is certainly one of the most injurious. History and observation will sufficiently show, that those

who have made the highest claims to sacred character, and the cure of souls, have not shown themselves the best qualified for the ministerial office and work, nor labored the most to enlighten and save mankind, and to promote the pure gospel.

The associating the notion of the cure of souls with the claim of a sacred character, appears to have been one of the arts of priestcraft; as it tended to lead the people to think their souls were delivered into the hands of the priest, that their understanding and consciences were in his keeping, and consequently to be guided by him: hence they would the more readily prostrate their understandings, receive implicitly his dogmas, and bow their necks to the yoke. Such servile maxims could only debase mankind, render them merely passive in religious matters, lead them to substitute blind assent in the place of a real conviction of truth, of rational and scriptural faith, to pace in the trammels of any superstition which the priest might dictate, to supplant intelligible and spiritual worship by a conformity to unmeaning ceremonies; in brief, to leave the most important of all concerns, those of the soul, of their salvation and eternal welfare, to the direction and management of another, and that too of one as fallible and liable to err as themselves. Before the claim of the cure of souls, and the exclusive management of religion by a particular class of men be admitted, they should prove that God hath committed to them so momentous a charge, and given them the extraordinary powers and authority which the execution of it requires; for such a trust and such authority no power on earth ever had to give; nor can any proof but what is miraculous be sufficient, as the New Testament is silent on the subject.

The claim of the cure of souls, and the exclusive management of religion, by whomsoever made, being unsupported by proof, is evidently usurpation, and seems an invasion of the prerogatives of Jesus Christ, as well as subversive of the common rights of christians. Is there not reason to think from the evidence furnished by the conduct of those who have made such claims, that their object has frequently been the securing

of their own honor, power and emolument, and that they have but little regarded the interests of religion any further than their own worldly interest has been concerned? Christianity is the common property of all, and no class of men can have a claim to hold it in trust, as an exclusive inheritance, that they may enjoy the benefit of being its sole administrators. It is high time that men every where should be roused to the consideration of their privileges and duties as men and christians, to attend to the cure of their own souls for themselves, to attend to religion as their own personal concern, as a concern of the utmost importance in which they must judge and act for themselves. The real ministers of Jesus Christ will stir them up to do this, and give them all the assistance in their power. Fully sensible, while they teach, instruct, admonish and exhort others, that it can answer the end designed no further than they can bring them to use their own understandings, and be active in religion, they will use all possible means to awaken them from the slumber of ignorance, and the benumbing influence of priestcraft and superstition.

2. "All who understand the gospel may preach it;" was a well known maxim of the justly celebrated Mr. R. Robinson. The same sentiment was avowed by Dr. Priestley; his words are, "Every man who understands the christian religion, I consider as having the same commission to teach it as that of any bishop in England or Rome." (See Priestley's Works, vol. xxii. p. 75.) Again (in vol. xxi. p. 482.) he says, "What were those persons whom we now call the *clergy*, originally, but the more reputable members of christian societies (all of whom we should now call laymen) to whom the government of the christian church was delegated? They had no particular *character* but what the votes of their fellow christians invested them with, and what they could at pleasure deprive them of. All the rest of what is now called a *spiritual character* has been the addition of men in times of gross ignorance and superstition." Such has been the opinion of truly great men, who needed nothing but their learning, eminent talents, invaluable services, and exemplary conduct to distinguish them: and it is an opinion

perfectly consistent with, and fully supported by, the New Testament. It is clearly the duty of every man who understands the gospel, and enjoys its privileges and blessings, to do all he can to communicate the knowledge of it to others, and to make them partakers of the same privileges and blessings which he enjoys : and as preaching was the original, and is one of the most ready and efficient means of making the pure gospel known, and of diffusing its blessings, it must be the duty of every man, who is at all capable, and has any opportunity of doing it, to preach the gospel. There are no ordinances of the gospel but what may be properly administered by any real christian who is capable of explaining their nature and design. No divine mission is now to be expected, and no human authority or formal appointment is necessary to qualify a man to preach and minister the ordinances of christianity.

When it is said, that all who understand the gospel may preach it, it must be taken for granted, that, with the knowledge of the gospel, they possess the ability of making what they understand intelligible to others, of communicating the knowledge they have attained ; for it would be absurd for any one to attempt to teach in public who is incapable of teaching ; but of the ability of any one to preach, himself and his hearers are the only proper judges, they are the only persons whom it concerns. With the understanding of the gospel ought ever to be connected a spirit and conduct suitable to it ; for it must be highly inconsistent and disgraceful for a man to preach the gospel, whatever may be his talents, who does not himself obey it, but whose life scandalizes it. The matter may be put in a full, clear and guarded light, thus ; “ Every man who understands the gospel, and who is capable of expressing his views of it so as to be understood by others, and whose life and conduct is consistent with it, has a right, if he think proper, to preach it, whether he be learned or unlearned, whatever may be his worldly condition or employment.”

However desirable and important it may be, and its desirableness and importance are not questioned, that christian ministers should be free from worldly business, and devote them-

selves entirely to the work of the gospel, this is not absolutely necessary, any more than, in all cases practicable; for it was not so with all the first christian ministers: and for those who are so entirely devoted to the ministry, to hold it as a monopoly, to be exercised by them exclusively, is inconsistent with christian liberty, the interests of true religion, unauthorized by the New Testament, and contrary to the practice of the purest times, and may justly be regarded as priestcraft and ecclesiastical usurpation.

3. A truly learned ministry is of essential importance, and inestimable value to the christian cause. In the apostolic age the want of human learning was supplied by supernatural gifts and miraculous powers; besides the facts and doctrines of christianity were not then deposited in a dead language, which without learning cannot be understood. While all this is fully admitted, there are several other things which it will be proper to notice. It is not necessary that all ministers should be learned men, in the common sense of the expression, and among those who are learned that all should be equally so: still it should be the aim of every minister to acquire all the learning he can consistently with his various duties. In many places the pure gospel has been and may be preached, and the christian cause carried on with success, by pious ministers, well acquainted with the scriptures and theological subjects, who have had little, if any, knowledge of the dead languages, of the sciences, or of general literature. Ministers differently qualified, in this respect, may be best suited to different situations and classes of people. That we may always have a sufficient number of deeply learned ministers, it is necessary that our institutions for the educating of proper persons for the important work should be well supported. Still it is to be remembered that there are various kinds of learning; and that a minister may be truly learned in the scriptures and in christian theology, who has no pretensions to classical learning, polite literature, or scientific knowledge; and it is scriptural and theological learning which his office and work as a minister require; yet surely no man of sense will either despise or

wilfully neglect any other kind of learning. A minister who possesses good sense and strong natural powers, if he begin early in life, under whatever disadvantages as to learning he may commence, will not long remain very illiterate, and if he become in any sense learned, it matters not whether he educates himself or be educated by others; it matters not where or how he gets his learning so that he really gets it. There have been eminently useful and highly respectable ministers who have been self-educated men. But such knowing the difficulties they have had to surmount, and the great labor their attainments have cost them, will not only feel the value of what they have attained; but be zealous to promote those public institutions which facilitate the acquisition of the learning which is useful in the christian ministry.

After all, learning, like every other good thing, may be misapplied and abused, the minister, for want of making a proper use of his learning, may be less useful than he otherwise would be. This is the case when the work of the ministry becomes subordinate, and the minister is lost in the literary character; also when a man becomes vain, or proud of his learning, and despises or neglects those who have not had the same advantages as himself; and when it leads him to such a style in his ministrations as is not suited to the common people, or renders him less condescending and assiduous in any part of his work as a minister than he would otherwise be.

If those who have been regularly trained and educated for the ministry, conclude that, consequently, they have an exclusive right to act as christian ministers, and regard it as a genteel profession, to which they have been brought up, and in which others who have not been so trained ought not to intermeddle, giving themselves consequential airs, as a distinct and superior order among christians, they prostitute learning to the purposes of priestcraft, and should call the ministry there trade; for a trade they make of it; and awful will be the account they must give hereafter.

R. WRIGHT.

(To be continued.)

THE UNITARIAN MARRIAGE BILL.

"It shall turn to you for a testimony."—JESUS CHRIST.

To the Editors of the Christian Reflector.

GENTLEMEN;

I know not, whether it is matter of regret, or of congratulation, that the Unitarian Marriage Bill has been thrown out by the lords. As it respects the violence which has been done to the rights of conscience, the blow which has been given to religious liberty, the melancholy spectacle of intolerance which has been presented to the nation, to Europe, to posterity, it is a matter of regret. But as it respects the situation in which it has placed Unitarians, or in which it has kept them placed, it may be considered a matter of congratulation. "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." Their integrity is once more put to the test; and by maintaining it universally in their churches, they would present an example to the christian world, that would impress it with an irresistible force; an example, that would never cease to operate, so long as the records of history preserved it in being; an example worthy of the advocates of that grand truth, and first principle of religion, the strict and absolute unity of God.

If they have heart and spirit, they may make this resound in every corner of the island. They may present another of those instances, in which "God causeth the wrath of man to praise him," and "all things to work together for good, to them that love him." Never was a religious sect placed in a more interesting or commanding attitude, with respect to those around. And if they be not wanting to themselves—to the cause which they have espoused—to the God whom they serve, they will declare in one united voice, to those who would compel them to violate conscience, or prohibit them from contracting marriage, "we will not bow down to the gods that you have set up." "Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." "We ought to obey God rather than men."

If Unitarians are not to believe one thing, and practise another, this is the line of conduct which they must adopt. If the legislature will not *grant* them relief from a ceremony which violates their consciences, they must *take* relief; there is no alternative. For when men command us to do, what God has forbidden us to do, we ought to disobey; like those noble minded men, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and the apostles, Peter and John. Our rulers command us when we contract marriage, to bow down in a ceremony which recognizes

"God the Father, and God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost;" a doctrine, which we believe to be false and unscriptural, polytheistical and highly absurd. We ought, therefore, to tell them in a language which cannot be misunderstood, that we will not obey their command, but the command of God; who hath forbidden us to acknowledge any other God, but himself alone. In plain terms, we ought henceforth, regardless of the consequences, to solemnize our own marriages, in our own places of worship, in the name of the one only living and true God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and not go to the church, and solemnize them in the name of a trinity, which we utterly disbelieve.

It is true, the parties are not required to use the precise words, "God the Father, and God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost;" but what is the ceremony, but a strictly Trinitarian ceremony? The man is required to say, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The parties are married in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. The doxology is, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost," &c. And we all know what interpretation Trinitarians put upon these words.

Besides which, the parties are required to *kneel*; and this, surely, is an act of religious homage; an act of religious homage, that is paid to the trinity; and paid to the trinity, by Unitarians!

And in addition to this, while the parties are *kneeling*, the minister says, "Lord have mercy upon us." And the clerk answers, "*Christ* have mercy upon us."

Now, under these circumstances, is it possible for Unitarians to conform to the ceremony, without at the same time sacrificing principle, and being self-convicted of idolatry? And what remains for them, but the absolute necessity, of solemnizing their own marriages, in their own places of worship?

To the legislature, they have been perfectly respectful. They have shown every disposition, nay, the most anxious desire, to obey the laws of the country. They have consulted, in every respect the feelings and prejudices of churchmen, and even the interest of the church. They prayed simply, that they might not be required to conform to a ceremony, which did violence to their consciences; and they were willing, that either the clergy should perform it, or their own ministers, and they would even pay to the church the usual fees. To deny them this simple request, was surely, the most unfeeling denial, that has ever been recorded on the journals of the house. And Unitarians would stand perfectly justified to the nation and to posterity, in taking that which the house has refused to give; what no power upon earth has a right to withhold from them, and what they ought not to be required to ask.

I would recommend, that meetings be held immediately in our congregations, to pass resolutions expressive of our sentiments on the subject, our determination not to bow down in a ceremony which violates our principles, and that if any evils hence arise, they must be laid to the account of those who would oppress conscience.

Although I add a fictitious signature, yet my name will be forthcoming, should it be necessary to produce it. At present I sign myself,

A UNITARIAN CONVERT.

The Dissenter, No. II.

"Venerating Truth above all earthly things, I can think and speak of myself, as well as of other men, without malice and without extenuation,"—*Gilbert Wakefield.*

THAT such a bond of union, as the plan suggested in my first essay, would, if zealously entered into by the Unitarian denomination, be productive of incalculable good, in promoting a spirit of friendship among its members, and causing the more rapid spread of our principles, cannot, I think, be questioned. The pure gospel would be carried to the cottages of the poor and the needy, and many who at present, by the pressure of the times, are unable to attend the regular places of worship, would, by the instrumentality of this plan, hear and rejoice in the consolations of religion. It would make of ministers and people a band of brothers, illustrating by their unanimity the peaceful influence of their principles, and would exhibit the triumphs of a benevolent faith, by being the grave of every narrow, unsocial, unfriendly sentiment. It would enable those religious teachers whose valuable time is now occupied in school-keeping, to devote their talents to the wider dissemination of undefiled christianity. Instead of handling the birch, they would grasp the missionary staff, and in lieu of being confined to one spot to arouse dulness or watch over stupidity, they would be on their pilgrimages of usefulness, breathing the fresh air of heaven, and exciting to inquiry, and cheering misery, and giving instruction to the ignorant and consolation to the wretched. Now their occupation is to prepare human beings

for this world's business—then, it would be exchanged for the more pleasing employment of educating man for another and a better world.

Were this plan embraced and acted on, every society in the kingdom would know what every other society was doing; the knowledge would excite emulation, and measures which now would be regarded as Utopian dreams might then with ease and facility be executed.

The views stated in the Dissenter, No. I, are not absolutely new. Something of the same kind was proposed through the medium of the Monthly Repository, in the year 1812, p. 431, by an individual signing himself "An Unitarian Layman;" an individual whose enlightened mind was ever intent on doing good, and whose benevolent heart ever prompted the promotion of the happiness of his fellow creatures, the late Mr. William Gaskell of Warrington. But his plan did not seem to excite much notice in the denomination. It was discussed, and often in the many pleasant and instructive meetings which were at that period held by the members of the congregation to which he belonged; and by one of the most valuable of them was animadverted on in a very able paper in the Repository for 1812, p. 570, but here the matter appeared to drop.

In July 1813, however, a very similar plan was brought into action in Scotland, through the exertions of Mr. (now Dr.) Southwood Smith, then the respected minister at Edinburgh, and of Mr. George Harris, then a student in the University of Glasgow. The idea of this society was suggested by the plan proposed by Mr. William Gaskell, to which I have alluded. To support this institution, Funds were formed in each congregation of Unitarians in Scotland, precisely upon the plan of what have since been denominated the Fellowship Funds, proposed nearly three years afterwards by Dr. Thomson of Halifax.

In January 1816, at the opening of the chapel at Oldham, Dr. Thomson proposed that for the purpose of assisting the friends in many districts desirous of erecting places of worship, and of aiding the individual contributions of the more wealthy

to these objects, Fellowship Societies should be organized, "to which the *poorer* members should be weekly or monthly contributors," and that these societies should be preliminary to a general association for the Northern Counties. See *Monthly Repository* for 1816, p. 122.

In September 1816, Dr. Thomson proposed his plan more at large, in the *Monthly Repository*, p. 578. He entered into a detail of the rules that would be necessary—and again advertising to the individual calls that would of course continue to be made on the rich, remarks, "Before you is a plan which whilst it organizes a *fresh set* of contributors, and falls so easily on all as not to be felt, by any, does not *interfere* with, nor *supersede* the exercise of liberality on the part of the *affluent members* of the Unitarian body."

In consequence of these suggestions, perhaps sixty Fellowship Funds have been formed in the Unitarian congregations in England, but whether *as yet* they have been productive of good, may, I think, well be questioned. In too many instances the original idea of Dr. Thomson has been completely lost sight of; and instead of the Funds being the means of organizing "*a fresh set of contributors*," is it not to be feared they have only proved *screens for the old set*? How many of these societies are there to which the rich as well as the poor subscribing their penny a week, both parties consider themselves exonerated from any further appeal; I beg pardon—no, the first party, the rich, only plead the exemption; the latter party, the poor, are ever ready to contribute even from their poverty to promote the cause of truth and righteousness. There are one or two Funds framed on a different principle from this, where each individual gives what he considers right, and where thus a very large sum is annually collected; but these are *exceptions*, the other is the *rule*,

By these means, not good but evil is effected. Should a person deputed from a congregation, requesting aid in their labors of benevolence, go into a town where one of these Fellowships has been established, and apply for an individual donation, the answer too often is, "Have you laid your case before the Fellowship?" "No, I have not." "Then I can

give nothing; the Fellowships were formed for these purposes." And how often has it occurred that the very individuals making this reply were not themselves contributors of one farthing to the institution to which they referred. Useless would it be to say to such people that these Funds were meant for the poor, not for the rich; they intrench themselves behind their protecting influence as behind a strong tower. And whilst the poor man is subscribing his penny a week, and giving his mite besides to any cause which he deems peculiarly worthy of support; the wealthy and the powerful content themselves with either giving nothing, or what is to them next to nothing, to these otherwise valuable institutions; and if they be pressed to contribute independently of their subscriptions, point to their fortress of parsimony, the convenient plea of indifferentism, and exclaim "Ask the Fellowship."

Such are some of the abuses of Fellowship Funds, and another erroneous manner of appropriating the money raised, Dr Thompson himself pointed out in the *Monthly Repository* for 1818, p. 302; and his censure is deserving the serious attention of those whom it may concern. "I have observed with regret," says the Dr., "the funds of some of these institutions (judging by the rules) may be applied to purposes certainly not in the contemplation of the proposer, such as repairs of the chapel, &c."

Were Funds worthy of the name of Fellowship Societies established in every Unitarian congregation, they would certainly be of essential benefit to our cause. They would unite exertions which now are scattered and disjointed, and would accumulate strength sufficient for the accomplishment of every valuable and important object connected with christian reformation. It must be the wish of every sincere believer that this may be speedily effected; and whatever plan may be deemed most advisable to promote a concentration of that power which the Unitarian body assuredly possesses, whether it be the one I have sketched, or that proposed by any other individual, will be joyfully hailed by every person who has the advancement of the holy cause of truth and righteousness sincerely at heart.

RESTRICTOR.

To the Editors of the Christian Reflector,

GENTLEMEN,

There is a class of persons, whom I shall denominate "poetical carpenters," who are afflicted with a propensity to improve the labors of others; so fastidious are they, that not even Pope, nor Dryden, nor Milton, are exempted from their emendations: they are fond of splicing a piece of their own work upon the most beautiful antique, making a sort of mosaic ground, with here and there a patch of new material on an old and venerable edifice: sometimes they take out a whole plank, or line, and substitute one of their own, but you may always perceive where it is inserted very distinctly.

I have been led to these observations by noticing the alterations which some of these artists have made in the originals of many of the Hymns of the Paradise Street Chapel Collection, a very large portion of which have suffered under this kind of censorship. What a fine taste for poetry he must have had who made the alterations, distinguished by italics, in the following hymn of Mr. Scott!

MARK, when tempestuous winds arise,
The wild confusion and uproar;
All ocean mixing with the skies,
And shipwrecks dash'd upon the shore.
Not less confusion racks the mind,
By its own fierce ideas tost;
When reason is to rage resign'd,
And in the whirl of passion lost.
O self-tormenting child of pride,
Anger, bred up in hate and strife;
Ten thousand ills, by thee supply'd,
Mingle the cup of bitter life.
Happy the meek, whose gentle breast,
Serene as summer's evening ray,
Calm as the regions of the blest,
Enjoys on earth celestial day.
No friendships broke their bosoms sting,
No jars their peaceful tents invade,
Safe underneath Almighty wing,
And, foes to none, of none afraid.
Spirit of grace, all meek and mild,
With thy whole self our souls possess;
Passion and pride be hence exil'd,
So shall our frame thy own express:

Now for the improvements, see the Paradise Street Chapel Collection.

MARK, when tempestuous winds arise,
The wild confusion and uproar,
All ocean mixing with the skies,
And wrecks are dashed upon the shore.

Not less confusion racks the mind,
 When, by the whirl of passion tost,
 Calm reason is to rage resigned,
 And peace in angry tumult lost

Happy the meek, whose gentle breast,
 Serene as summer's evening ray,
 Calm as the regions of the blest,
 Enjoys on earth celestial day

No friendships broke their bosoms sting,
 No jars their peaceful tents invade,
 Safe underneath the Almighty's wing,
 And, foes to none, of none afraid.

O may a spirit meek and mild,
 With gentle snay our souls possess;
 Passion and pride be thence exiled!
 And to be blest, still may we bless!

Aye, bless us indeed! can any thing be more barbarous?
 I have been assured that it was a source of great pain to
 Mrs. Barbauld to see her exquisitely beautiful compositions
improved by these mechanics.

In the original of a beautiful hymn by the late Rev. P.
 Houghton, the following lines,

"shall meet,
 Shall meet to part no more,"

have been altered to

"shall meet,
 Their earthly sorrows o'er."

It is not much to be wondered at that the fine alliteration in
 the original should be deemed a blemish instead of a beauty,
 by such artists as these! whose conceptions could rise no
 higher than to rejoice at having finished their earthly labors,
 which I sincerely hope they have, in the poetical department
 at least.

G.

QUESTIONS,

*Addressed to the Bench of Bishops, relative to the Unitarian Marriage Bill,
 which was lost in the House of Lords, by the motion of the Bishop of Chester,
 Tuesday, May 4th, 1824.*

"All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even
 so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." JESUS CHRIST.

1. Is the marriage ceremony of the Established Church, a
 civil or a religious service?

2. Is the doctrine which it contains, Tinitarianism or Unitarianism, or what is it?

3. What interpretation do Trinitarians put upon the words, "The Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost?" or have they a different meaning in the marriage ceremony from what they have in any other connection?

4. If Unitarians use the form of words in the preceding question in their own interpretation, is it right that they should be compelled to use them with the Trinitarian interpretation?

5. Are not the words used in the ceremony, "*Christ* have mercy upon us," a prayer addressed to him as God? and if so, is it not wicked to compel those to engage in such a prayer who do not believe him to be God?

6. Do not the words used in the ceremony, "*God* the Father, and *God* the Son, and *God* the Holy Ghost," put it beyond all doubt that the ceremony is strictly a Trinitarian ceremony? and if so, is it not again wicked to compel those to conform to it who utterly disbelieve and reject such a doctrine?

7. Ought every religious service to be entered upon with devotional feelings, and sincerity of heart? or is it a matter of indifference?

8. If every man ought to worship God in spirit and in truth, can that man be a good man, or a good christian, or pleasing to God, who compels another to engage in a service which violates his conscience? or, rather, must he not be a wicked man, and totally unimpressed with the fear of God and christian principles?

9. If governors ought to be a terror to evil doers, but a praise to them that do well, are they not highly reprehensible when they cause religion to be prostituted to deceit and hypocrisy at the very altar of God? and if ministers of religion do so, is not their case much worse—their conduct much more wicked?

10. Are we not, as christians, to do to others as we would that they should do to us? and ought not christian ministers more especially to exemplify this in their lives and conduct?

11. How have they acted consistently with this christian precept who have voted against the Unitarian Marriage Bill? Would they like to be compelled to conform to a ceremony strictly Unitarian? or would they like to be compelled to acknowledge a little wafer as God, or a reptile as God, or a beast as God, or a block of wood as God, before they could contract marriage?

12. If then they could not, how have they obeyed this christian precept? and how are they entitled to the name of christian?

13. Did Jesus Christ encourage persecution, or did he condemn it?

14. And what persecution can be ranker than that of compelling men to violate their consciences as the price of obtaining the protection of the law? Luke ix. 55, 56. 1 Cor. xiii. 1—13.

15. When men command us to do what God has forbidden us to do, how are we to act? should we obey God or men? Daniel iii. 1 to the end of the chapter. Daniel vi. 1. to the end of the chapter. Acts iv. 18—20. v. 27—29.

16. In what part of the scriptures has God commanded us to pray to him as a trinity? or as "God the Father, and God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost?" Be pleased to point the passage out that Unitarians may obey it.

17. If you cannot point out such a passage, is not the enormity much greater of compelling men to conform to a religious ceremony in which it is found? A. U. C.

Religious Intelligence.

THE Annual Meeting of the Presbyterian and Unitarian ministers of Lancashire and Cheshire will be held, we understand, at Altringham, on Thursday, 17th June. Service to begin at eleven o'clock. The Rev. W. Hincks, of Liverpool, to take the devotional service, and the Rev. John Gaskell, of Dukensfield, to preach. There will be a dinner at the Unicorn Inn. The meeting of the Missionary Society will be held the same day.

The Annual Meeting of the West Riding, Yorkshire, Unitarian Tract Society was held at Mill Hill Chapel, Leeds. The devotional part of the service was conducted by the Rev. T. Heneiken of Bradford, and a sermon appropriate to the occasion was preached by the Rev. J. Brettell of Rotherham. W. Davy, Esq. Consul of the United States of America, presided as chairman at the meeting of the Tract Society.

The Meeting House in Great Cross Hall Street, Liverpool, in which the Unitarian Society assembled, having been sold out of their hands, the Society have fitted up a large and commodious Room in Hunter Street, at the back of the premises occupied by Mr. Pegram, where they now regularly assemble, for the Public Worship of the One God, every Sunday, in the morning at eleven o'clock, and in the evening at half-past six. A meeting for religious discussion is also held every Monday evening.

The Unitarian Meeting House at Todmorden will be opened on June 6th, called Whitsunday, on which occasion three sermons will be preached. The Association of the Methodist Unitarians of Rossendale, Rochdale, &c. will be held the next day, (June 7th) on which occasion two sermons will be preached. The Rev. Dr. Philipps, Rev. G. Harris, and Rev. W. Stevens are expected to preach on these occasions.

A Correspondent wishes to be informed if there be a small work on the Evidences of Christianity, in Question and Answer adapted to Sunday schools. It should of course be plain and simple as possible. The Analysis of Paley is too large, and much above the capacity of Sunday scholars. Mr. Grundy's Outline, though a valuable work, is not in question and answer.

Important Question. Did Jesus of Nazareth worship Jehovah as One God, or as a Trinity of persons?

Original Poetry.

Hymn for the Children of a Charity School.

FROM azure skies, his throne of pow'r,
Our heavenly Father views the flower,
That blooms in nature's native dress,
And blushes in its loveliness.

And he will look complacent down,
When kindred souls his goodness own,
And he will bless the lips that raise
The hymn of gratitude and praise.

How sweet then in his courts to bring,
The young heart's early offering,
And bid its purest thoughts arise
Before his throne in sacrifice.

For mercies past, and hopes that rest
On future joys, when all are blest;
For every friend, that leads our youth
In wisdom's ways—the ways of truth;—

For that pure word whose streams do bless
The nations with its holiness;
For light and life by Jesus given
To guide our youthful feet to heaven;

Oh may our songs his praise rehearse
Who rules the boundless universe!
Oh may our bosoms breathe the pray'r
That he will make our friends his care.

ICHNEUTED.

*The Pleasures of this Life nothing in comparison with
those of another and a better.*

How cheering to the soul is balmy Spring!
How soft and gentle is the vernal breeze!
How tunefully the feathered warblers sing!
How fragrant is the bloom which decks the trees!

How fair is life, aside from anxious cares!
How sweet the hours in virtuous causes spent!
How pure a joy domestic comfort wears!
How blest that state illumin'd by content!

How bright are friendship's joyous, gladsome rays!
How does its influence cheer the hours of night!
How happy does it render all our days!
How greatly tend to make each burden light!

Yes, Spring possesses many pleasing charms,
And life has many comforts fair and gay;
Friendship is pleasing when the heart it warms,
But, ah! all these will quickly pass away!

For cheering Spring will very shortly fade,
And every tree and every fragrant flower,
Will be o'ercast by Winter's gloomy shade,
And feel the tempest's desolating power.

Fair as is life when warmed by virtue's fire
And sweet content, 'twill very soon be o'er;
For man is born and lives but to expire,—
The strongest, healthiest, soon will be no more!

Bright as the rays of friendship now may seem,
How often does it prove an empty name!
Or, if sincere, ere we enjoy the dream,
Time, space, or death destroy the gen'rous flame.

As if to show to vain, unthinking man,
(What care-clad mortals seldom wish to know,)
How visionary is each fairy plan,
Of lasting happiness while here below!

In wisdom 'tis that Providence ordains
No lasting bliss to be below the skies;
And with our pleasures mingles certain pains,
That we should look to more substantial joys.

Beyond this fleeting life, beyond the tomb,
God hath prepared a state of endless rest:
There Spring eternal dwells in heavenly bloom,
And flowers that never fade in beauty drest.

There life shall be renewed, no more to end,
Nor death, nor sickness, ever enter there:
The happy saint eternity shall spend,
With Christ his Lord, and his bright glories share.

In that blest land each virtuous friend shall meet
His lost companion, whom he loved below;
With sweet affection shall each other greet,
To feel no more the burst of parting woe.

How poor, how mean do earthly scenes appear,
Compared with those eternal crowned with love!
O may I never seek my chief good here,
But travel on to Zion's courts above!

Hail, glorious city of my God and King!
Soon, soon, I hope within thy courts to be!
Almighty God! do Thou thy servant bring,
Through life, through death, to happiness and Thee!

Flushing.

S. M.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We are under the unavoidable necessity of postponing *Homo* and *Seneca* to our next number.

We thank our friend C. for his communication, of which we shall make an early use.

K, on Trinitarian Additions to the Scriptures, is received, and shall have a place as soon as possible.

The Christian Reflector,

AND THEOLOGICAL INQUIRER.

"I speak as unto wise men ; judge ye what I say." PAUL.

No. 59. LIVERPOOL, JULY 1st, 1824. Price 4½d

The Dissenter, No. III.

—♦♦♦♦—
"Venerating Truth above all earthly things, I can think and speak of myself, as well as of other men, without malice and without extenuation."—Gilbert Wakefield.

—♦♦♦♦—

ON THE SPIRIT OF DISSENT.

EVERY age of the world has witnessed dissent. The variety of circumstances in which men are placed ; the casual impressions which are made on their minds, the state of the mind when any thing is presented to it for acceptance or rejection, render the degrees of assent or dissent as various as the countenances of men. On one man the truth of a proposition may be impressed with all the force of demonstration ; on another the same evidence may produce nothing more than a bare negative assent, that it *may* be true ; whilst on a third the effect produced will be a positive disbelief of its truth, where before there existed a total indifference to it ; the powers of the mind being excited to action by the force of the evidence adduced, and having something on which to fix itself. All subjects afford evidence of the truth of these observations ; the most common or uninteresting speculations which engage men's attention as well as the most interesting and important ones ; grave or gay, solemn or trivial, producing effects corresponding with their importance or conceived importance ; sometimes passed by regardless, as though they were not ; at others causing infractions to be made on the social intercourse of society, dissolving the bonds of friendship, severing the ties of nature, breaking the chords of sympathy ; and implanting the most deadly hatred in the bosom which ought to have glowed with the purest love.

Man is naturally a religious being. The infirmity of his

nature, his liability to err in the pursuit of happiness, his subjection to circumstances which thwart his views and disarrange his plans and prevent the accomplishment of what is most dear to him; his continual aspirations for something which he has not, and dread of future evil make him conscious of his dependance upon something superior to himself; and conceiving that the being who has the destinies of his nature in his keeping may be swayed by like motives with himself, he naturally seeks to cultivate his favor and to deprecate his wrath. Hence his hopes and his fears, his anticipated success or dreaded failure are closely interwoven with his intercourse with the Supreme Being; his existence and mode of government become to him speculations of the greatest importance. He conceives the views which he is led to form to be the perfection of reason and the acmé of truth. Other views he regards not only as departures from truth but as attacks on his God which he is bound to repel. He feels most acutely and acts most severely; regarding as a crime what is nothing more than an exercise of a right, and inflicting punishment where none is due. In precisely the same ratio as dissent on religious matters is felt and dealt with by the advocates of "things as they are" does the dissenter feel interested in the exposure and destruction of what he deems to be error. Alike jealous for the honor of his God and anxious that he should be worshiped in a manner worthy of his nature, and consistent with truth, he sees with concern the falsehood which has been engrafted upon a system of purity, and the error which has been interwoven with genuine religion, and he determines to attempt the destruction of the incongruous pile and to restore the sacred edifice to its original simplicity and beauty. Nor has he to contend with opinions only, though the accumulations of ages make even this a Herculean task. The powers which be, the priests and governors have to be contended with; in many cases the laws of his country have had to be violated, and thus the double charge of heresy and sedition, of dissent and disaffection have had to be replied to. From the rulers nothing like favor could be expected: attacks on their "vested rights" will always be met

with the infliction of as much chastisement as may be deemed sufficient to silence the complaining parties and to deter others from attempting the like reform. By the priests, no quarter will be given ; their craft in danger, they must exert themselves to protect it. With the people, their long standing prejudices are dear to them ; reposing implicit confidence in the wisdom of their ancestors, resigning themselves to the guidance of the priests, who studiously avoid the mention of opinions differing from those which they teach to them, or if compelled to notice them, do it only in the way of creating terror by representations of the most dreadful torments which await the abettors of the "new lights;" and the connexion which exists between their daily habits and associations, their pastime, and their recollections, the contest is difficult. They have indeed no "vested rights" to defend, no established error by which they make their gain and which will be endangered by the prevalence of a spirit of inquiry ; but their prejudices are strong and they are easily excited to second the designs of the interested, and therefore become parties to persecution.

Thus beset with difficulties the task of the christian reformer is most arduous ; and can be undertaken with effect only by men of the most resolute minds, men who are prepared to meet all sorts of opposition, to brave every kind of obstacle and to brook difficulties of every description and men withal ; fully satisfied of the justice of their cause and the importance of the establishment of truth, who love her for her own sake, and who are able to defend her against sophistry and violence.

Few men have been treated more harshly by the world than dissenters or christian reformers. Not content with inflicting the most cruel tortures, their motives have been impugned, their virtues tortured to appear as vices, their failings magnified and exposed. That they were faultless no one will for a moment contend. They were men ; and it is the privilege of man to err ; for to it are we indebted for the finest feelings and noblest deeds. Benevolence would have no object on which to shed its genial rays, pity would never be the inmate of the human bosom, compassion would not move men to deeds

of generosity ; and friendship would have some of its noblest incentives destroyed, we should never sympathize with objects of affection, or glow with indignation at the oppressor's wrongs. Patriotism and philanthropy would cease to be virtues, and we should not feel the inspiring throb at the recital of the deeds of the former, or the gratitude occasioned by the latter,—no : “ to err is human ;” and if to forgive be divine, we are indebted to the one for the possession of the other. The reformers were men ; and therefore they erred.—Their situation and the character of their undertaking made them peculiarly obnoxious to their contemporaries ; and as justification for the cruelties which were inflicted on them, aspersions on their motives and characters might naturally be expected ; but that men in after ages actually enjoying the benefit of their labors should join in the unhallowed work by subjecting their conduct to a scrutiny without making allowances for the peculiarity of the circumstances in which they were placed, and examining their faults by rules, which, though they are applicable to men as at present situated, ought not to be made the test of *their* conduct, should expose their measures to the ridicule of the vulgar, is most lamentable. *Their motives must have been good.* On no acknowledged principles can their actions be accounted for, if they are not allowed to have sprung from a sense of the necessity of their exertions, from a consciousness of duty, and from its imperious calls. Men are not apt to venture on dangerous enterprises without sufficient motives ; and no motives are sufficient to account for the conduct of the early reformers but their rectitude of principle. A love of singularity or innovation, or mere splenetic dislike to persons or systems will not induce men to forsake their peaceful homes to incur the displeasure of their friends, to break in upon the tenderest connections, to sacrifice the prospects of emolument, to become the objects of hatred, to be singled out and exposed to the detestation of their fellow creatures as disturbers of the public peace, as blasphemers of their God, and as violators of the sanctity of religion : much less will they induce any one to brave the instruments of torture,

the dungeon, or death. The one may be gratified at much less expence and may procure its rewards, the gaze of the vulgar and the pity-smile of the enlightened. And as for the other, men are not apt to gratify their spleen at the risk of so much. The reformers were confessedly guilty of some excesses; but let it be remembered that the opposition which they had to encounter, rendered violence in some cases necessary; that continual warfare in which they were engaged, would naturally make them haughty and severe; by keeping the mind continually excited would destroy that equanimity of temper which is necessary to judge of men by making due allowances for their prejudices and habits of thinking, and that, extreme depression of the mind, produces a revulsion, as much exceeding the bounds of propriety, as it has been sunk below its natural standard. That they were disturbers of the public peace must be evident; and so must all men be, who wish to cause a different way of thinking to be adopted. There are some periods in which men's minds appear to be sunk into a dead calm; resigning themselves to the superstitions which have been accumulating for ages, to the traditions of their fathers and the dogmas of the priests, they become debased and sunk, they putrify, and their noxious exhalations poison every thing around them; they hang like thick vapours over the earth, obscuring the vision and causing every thing to be seen through a false medium. And as in the natural world storms are required to purify the atmosphere, to mingle the elements anew, and to restore them to a healthy life-sustaining state; so in the mental and moral worlds are peculiar excitements necessary to regulate and preserve them. They produce fermentation which for a time is disagreeable to the quietly disposed, but they ultimately subside into a milder state capable of giving life and vigour to the faculties of men. The last observations will apply to another charge preferred against the early reformers; that they carried their opposition to an uncalled for extent; that they opposed things which were not really bad, that were harmless and might have been suffered to exist without danger even to the purer system which

they labored to establish. As in the tempest things are swept away which are not only harmless, but of real utility, so in the reformation of a country or a system, practices will be suppressed which, though they bode no evil, yet, stand in the way of the current. There were moreover some things which though not evil of themselves, being required to be done, and being made points of conscience with some, could not be complied with, without a deviation from the path of rectitude and seeming conformity with established error, which rendered resistance necessary.

To these men and their labors we owe much; the positive benefits which they conferred cannot now be noticed; they would occupy too much time, and exceed the space allowed me. But we owe them the tribute of affection, and the love of gratitude ought to bedew their graves, and the hand of charity to wipe off the stains, by which the interested and the bigoted have attempted to sully the purity of their characters. They were great men; and though they might not be all that we could wish, there is nothing in their conduct or characters which ought to make us ashamed of the title *DISSENTER*.

CLEANTHES.

JESUS OF NAZARETH A WORSHIPER OF THE FATHER ONLY.

To the Editors of the Christian Reflector.

GENTLEMEN,

Going one evening into a dissenting chapel, I was struck by the manner in which the minister addressed his supplications to Jehovah. After first addressing him as God, the supreme of all, and maker of all things, he next addressed him as a Son equal with the Father: then as a Holy Ghost or spirit, equal in power and glory with the Father and the Son: last, as the Triune God. It seemed as if each of this trinity, possessed some blessings which the other did not possess:—as if one of them, had some particular favor to confer, which the other was incapable of bestowing.

As the minister was one of those who call themselves evangelical: one of those who, with presumption, consign those who differ from them in the belief of the Triune God, to never ending torments, and contend, most earnestly, that those who, rejecting the doctrine of the trinity as unscriptural, worship Jehovah as one, existing in one undivided being, are not evangelical christians, are not followers of the Man of Nazareth, it shall be my employment to inquire, how far these evangelical christians' prayers and supplications assimilate to the prayers and supplications of him, whom they arrogate to themselves to be the followers of; and whose doctrine and example they pretend to promulgate and to imitate.

I shall begin the inquiry by answering that important question, "Did Jesus of Nazareth worship Jehovah as one God, or as a trinity of persons?" In perusing the records, which contain an account of Jesus of Nazareth's life and labors; of his midnight devotion, and his solemn prayers; I find him on all occasions addressing his supplication to One being only. In that memorable prayer recorded in Mat. xi. 25. and Luke x. 21. we find him praying in the following words, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, &c." In Mat. xxvi. 38, 39. He said to his disciples; "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here and watch with me. And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying *O my Father*, if it be possible let this cup pass from me, nevertheless not as I will but as thou wilt." He also uses similar words in Mat. xxvi. 42. Luke xxii. 42. John xii. 27. Mark xiv. 35, 36 In all which texts, we are informed, he invariably prayed, to his FATHER. And in that memorable prayer which Christ delivered on the occasion, recorded by John, chap. xvii, we have these words, "Then spake Jesus and lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son may glorify thee." And in the whole of the prayer, he repeatedly addresses Jehovah with the same appellation *Father*, when supplicating him for himself and his disciples. And previous to Christ's raising Lazarus from the dead, it is said, "Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, *Father* I thank thee that thou hast

heard me." John xi. 41. In these passages it is obvious to all, that the Man of Nazareth did not address Jehovah as the Son, nor as the Holy Ghost, nor as Triune God, but as one undivided being, the FATHER.

I am well aware of these evangelical christians' objection: "That Christ never forbade his followers to pray to a trinity of persons in the Godhead." To me it is obvious that, to have forbidden them to pray to a trinity of persons in the Godhead, after his solemn example, and his *positive command* "when ye pray say, our Father," his incontrovertible declaration, "they that worship the Father, must worship him (the *Father*) in spirit and in truth," his prophetic information to the woman of Samaria: "The hour is coming and now is, when the *true worshipers SHALL worship* the FATHER in spirit and in truth:" John iv. 23. I say to have forbidden them to worship a trinity, after his example and these his unequivocal commands and declarations, would have been superfluous in the extreme. Had it been the practice of the Jewish worshipers, or the Man of Nazareth and those who followed him, *ever* to have prayed to a trinity of persons in the godhead, it would have been necessary, after his command to pray to the *Father*, to have forbidden them to pray to a trinity. But when no such practice ever existed among them—when no such form as praying to a trinity of persons in the Godhead is recorded in the whole of the New or Old Testament: then to have forbidden them to do that, which never had been practised, nor ever was in use among them, was absolutely unnecessary. And to introduce such a practice as praying to a trinity—to address Jehovah in such a manner, is contrary to the example, and command of the Man of Nazareth *proves*, that, these evangelical christians who do so; either are wise above what is written, yea wiser than Christ; or, that they are not followers of Christ, consequently not, what they arrogate to themselves to be, evangelical christians.

These pretended evangelical christians' shield ALEIM, with which they affect to cover themselves, because of its being in the plural number, avails them nothing in this case. For in

no language or country is the word *Father* understood to be in the plural number ; nor in any case can it be changed to mean any thing but a singular number—one being only, except by changing the singular into plural, which is absolutely necessary, before praying to a trinity can be established upon evangelical authority.

Having by the evidence produced, been made acquainted, how the Man of Nazareth prayed to Jehovah, and having proved that he addressed Jehovah, not as a triune God, but as the *Father*, not as a trinity of persons in the godhead, but as one undivided being, and having been unable to discover that he ever prayed to Jehovah in one single instance, as these, who call themselves evangelical christians pray unto him, I am compelled to conclude, that, they are not followers of the Man of Nazareth, nor such worshipers as the evangelists declare he was. For his example they do not follow, his commands they do not obey, his pattern they are not imitators of; they follow other men's devices they worship strange and other Gods than the man of Nazareth worshiped; they worship a trinity of persons in the godhead, he worshiped the FATHER.

Yours, &c.

AN OBSERVER.

Bolton, June 12th, 1824.

To the Editors of the Christian Reflector.

GENTLEMEN,

In order to understand the following article, it may be necessary for such as are not engaged in the cotton manufactory, to remark, that certain days in the week are appropriated by the master manufacturers for receiving work from their weavers. The hours of *taking in*, as it is termed, are limited; a room is set apart for the weavers to meet in, and in rotation as they come to the waiting room they receive their wages, &c.

At such places, men, women and children meet promiscuously, and frequently have to wait several hours till their turn to *be fitted* arrives; during which various subjects of conversation are introduced; the weather, politics, religion and trade, the privations of the poor, "the oppressor's wrongs and the proud man's contumely" are favorite topics. At such a place and among

such company, it was the lot of the writer of the present article to be one, when the following conversation took place. With a view "to catch the manners living as they rise," I have noted it, and should you deem it worthy of a place in your publication, it is humbly at your service. To the conversation I have neither added nor diminished. In order to make the account intelligible I have given fictitious names to the speakers, and take up the tale at the period of my own entrance into the place.

Mrs. RICKER. Aye, aye, times are alter'd fro' what the were once. I wonder as measter's can sleep i' their beds when they think how poor folk are plagued. I wonder really as they are not fretted, when they see such rooks o' poor folk standing at their doors.

OLD NELLY. Freet'nt! Why woman, they would not be fret'nt iv they wer to see the Devil come wi' a *piece*, an it wer a good one.

AN OLD MAN. Well, I do really believe 'ot iv th' Devil would bring um *pieces* at they could get summut by, tradesmen would deal wi' un; but I think 'ot iv th' Devil wer to come wi' greyt horns and whisk abeat a fiery tail, and roar at um as fokes say he us't to do, by te maskins he would fret'n um.

GEORGE. Why, foke knows nout o' what they mean, when they talk abeat a Devil wi' horns and a fiery tail. Who ever seen sitch a thing. And its nout but ignorant foke as believes i' sitch a thing as a Devil at a'.

Mrs. RICKER. Why, na George, dunot you believe as ter is a Devil?

GEORGE. Noa I do not believe i' ony sitch stuff. Tell me who ever saw a Devil, or what use there is for a Devil? You may say, nobody ever seen God; that's true; but we can see the works o' God i' th' creation, and preservation o' us a'; but who ever saw either the Devil or ony o' his works; an' con ony o' you tell me what use ter is for a Devil, for I think we'r nout enough o' our sels without Devil.

Before any one had time to reply to the interrogatives of George, the door opened, and the next weaver was called upon to bring his work in, which happened to be George. As soon as the door was shut after him, Mrs. Ricker in a sort of stage whisper intimated to the motley assemblage, "Yon man's a Unitarian." "I thout so," said one. "I thout he wer a Carle's man" said another, and the conversation broke into several parties. I was at the back of the person whom I have denominated Mrs. Ricker, who on being asked by a female, if the Unitarians believed in a God, as they did not believe in a Devil, answered in a sort of half whisper, Well, they don believe in a God to be sure, to swear by as a body may say, but they believe in nout but one; for they do not believe as Jesus Christ

wer ought but a man, an' they do not believe as the virgin Mary wer a virgin; an' I tell what (continued the speaker) I sometimes thinks about these things mesell till I hardly know what I'm doing. I thinks how queer it would be iv I wer brought to bed of a God, for you know as the Virgin Mary wer nout but a woman; an' I thinks abeat these things woman till if I wer to think longer I should forget to do wark i' th family as I should do, and my very brain pan would be ready to crack. An' so I'll tell hoo how I gets o'er it. I thinks again o' our viccar; you seen he's a good mon, and has nought to bother his brains about, but to think about sitch thing; and surely sitch a mon as him is a vast deal better able to tell about sitch things than me, as has so many other things to think about, an so I thinks as th' viccar knows best what we should believe, an' so I leaves it a' to him."

A WEAVER.

To the Editors of the Christian Reflector.

GENTLEMEN,

It was a remark made by a certain wise man, whose name I do not now recollect upon an occasion of being asked respecting some things hard to be understood, in a work which he had perused, that, those things which he did understand being in themselves so excellent he would take for granted, that those were excellent also which he did not so clearly comprehend. Now, as faras regards myself, I am content to follow this rule with respect to that most valuable of all books, the Holy Scriptures, but for the sake of others, I would beg of some of your ingenious and learned correspondents to explain in a satisfactory manner, the circumstance narrated between the 12th and 22nd verses of the xi. chap. of St. Mark, of a fig tree being cursed by the Savior, because it bore not fruit prematurely and out of season; which circumstance some of the enemies of our religion tauntingly bring forward against him whom we regard as our great exemplar. They ask, how it was that he, who is represented as having a knowledge of what was passing in the hearts of men even before they gave their thoughts utterance, should be ignorant of so common a matter, as that of the time when it was usual for trees to bring forth their fruit, nay, so ignorant that he

should go up to a tree expecting to find fruit thereon, when at the same time the season for its bearing had not arrived, and then, when he found he was in error, to curse the unoffending tree, as it were in a rage.

It would be gratifying to many, to see the foregoing circumstances satisfactorily accounted for, in your valuable pages.

I remain, Sirs, with best wishes for the cause of truth,

AN UNITARIAN CHRISTIAN.

Cornwall, 8th June, 1824:

TRINITARIAN ADDITIONS TO THE SCRIPTURES.

To the Editors of the Christian Reflector.

GENTLEMEN,

IT is a circumstance particularly remarkable, that Trinitarians admit the principle argument of Unitarians; viz. that the scriptures teach the unity of God, and the humanity of Christ. When we bring forward the numerous, and self-evident passages on these points, they exclaim, with a simplicity peculiar to themselves, "We go with you as far as you go, but then we go farther." The meaning of which is, that the scripture standard is not sufficiently high for their sublime and mysterious doctrine; and therefore, they take the liberty to splice it, by adding to it a number of slips cut out by the wisdom of men. The following are a few specimens of this nature: and the reader will easily distinguish between the language of scripture, and that of mere human invention.

"Thou shalt have none other Gods before me"; the trinity. "I am God, and there is none else; one God in trinity, and trinity in unity. I, even I am he, and there is no God with me;" the triune Jehovah. Thou art the God, even thou alone; the glorious and ever blessed trinity. "The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord;" God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost: three persons in one God; distinct in person, but one in essence; and all co-equal and co-eternal together.

Thus also with respect to Jesus Christ. "A man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God;" God and man in one person. "Jesus of Nazareth a man approved of God;" perfect God and perfect man. "The man Christ Jesus;" the Godhead and manhood joined together in one person, whereof is one Christ, very God and very man. "By man came also the resurrection of the dead;" God of God, Light of Light,

very God of very God ; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all worlds were made.

Thus, while we can express our doctrine in the plain unequivocal language of scripture, Trinitarians are reduced to the sad necessity, of having recourse to the inventions of men ; as though men were wiser than God, and speak in a more intelligible language ! as though God had not spoken sufficiently out, and the puny efforts of men were required, to make his words complete and perfect !

They are only like the moles that were throwing up a rampart to protect the impregnable castle that was built on a rock, the basis of which was the centre of the earth, the top of which pierced the clouds, and the thickness of the walls thereof could not be measured by cubits. "They are only raising barriers to protect that church against which the gates of hell shall not prevail."

Well ; let them say no more that Unitarians are wise above what is written ; lest, "out of their own mouths they should be condemned." K.

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY DEFENDED, AND PRIEST-CRAFT EXPLODED:

(Continued from page 132)

Sect. 6. Reason hostile to Priestcraft—Prostration of the Understanding—Religion turned into Mystery.

It is a just maxim, "no man is against reason till he finds that reason is against him ;" for those who shew themselves hostile to reason, prove that they regard reason as their enemy. Christianity being a reasonable service, its true ministers can have nothing to fear from reason ; on the contrary, they will hail its free exercise, and appeal to it as a friend. Against nothing have the advocates for priestcraft more loudly declaimed than the unrestrained use of reason on religious subjects. To cry down reason may be regarded as a part of their craft. They seem alarmed at its free exercise, and terror struck at the apprehension of every thing being brought to the test of it. They proclaim it carnal, a blind guide and talk as if they supposed faith was to be builded upon its ruins. But how can reason be carnal, seeing carnal means fleshy, and is opposed

to what is rational? The words carnal and reason express ideas as dissonant as animalism and rationality, flesh and spirit. If reason be a blind guide, where are we to find in man a guide that can see, any principle to direct his steps? Hath impulse or passion eyes? What is meant by the eye of the mind, or the eyes of the understanding? If reason be extinguished, what mental light will remain. To build faith on the ruins or subversion of reason, much resembles making a mad-house the foundation of the church. Men are told they must not reason, but believe! As if men were to believe without reason! as if they must act like insane persons in order to be religious! as if it were necessary for them to shut their eyes that they may see! After all, these declaimers against reason are glad to avail themselves of it so far as it will serve their purpose; yea, they even reason against the use of reason, which is attempting to make reason commit suicide; it is only when they feel that they cannot stand against reason, that they proscribe it as a weapon unlawful in the religious warfare. Their conduct proves that their cause is bad, that they maintain what is unreasonable; for no man who wishes to support only what is reasonable will be afraid of reason.

We need not wonder that the advocates for priestcraft should cry out against reason, and labor to persuade mankind to disuse it in religion; for had not the people been cajoled or frightened out of the use of their reason in religious matters, they could never have been deceived and duped by their ghostly leaders, nor have been brought to surrender their christian rights and liberties into the hands of their pretended spiritual guides, as they have for many ages done. As the priests could not help seeing that reason was against them, and that for the people to exercise it freely in all matters of faith and religion would be ruinous to their craft, it is no wonder that they have labored to degrade it, and fulminated their anathemas against the use of it. Far otherwise was it with the first and best teachers of christianity; they taught no irrational doctrines, they required nothing unreasonable of their hearers, they practised no craft: therefore they had nothing to say against reason, they did

nothing to prevent the free and full exercise of it upon every subject. Jesus Christ appealed to the reason of his hearers ; " Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right." The apostles reasoned with the Jews in their synagogues. Paul before Felix his judge, reasoned concerning the faith of Christ. But when they reasoned, by so doing, they appealed to the reason of those who heard them. One apostle speaks of what christianity requires as a reasonable service, and requests his fellow christians to pray that he might be delivered from unreasonable men ; another exhorts christians to be ready to give a reason of the hope that was in them ; but how could what christianity requires be a reasonable service, if it required us to believe or do any thing but what reason will approve ? Why pray to be delivered from unreasonable men, and from them merely, if christians disused their reason in religion, and so far became unreasonable ; and if those who brought every thing to the test of reason were to be regarded as enemies of the gospel ? How could christians give a reason of the hope that was in them if they had not used their own reason on the subject ?

After the example of Jesus Christ and his apostles, true christian ministers will address themselves to the reason of their hearers : they will do all they can to excite men every where to use their reason freely in all religious matters, and encourage them to bring every thing to the test of reason. Having no corrupt interest to support, influenced by no sinister motives, persuaded of the truth and reasonableness of what they teach, and having nothing in view but the promotion of pure and undefiled religion, and the good and salvation of their fellow creatures, so far from dreading any thing from reason, what they fear is that the people should not use their reason, and carefully and impartially examine every thing for themselves. They can look for no success any further then men have their eyes opened, their minds enlightened, than they are brought to the knowledge of the truth : and they know this can be the case only so far as they use their reason without prejudice.

The prostration of the understanding, however necessary in

order to the reception of the dogmas of reputed orthodoxy, and the upholding of priestcraft and religious domination, is no part of the humility required by the great master of christians and taught in the New Testament. The gospel is communicated for the express purpose of enlightening men; but to enlighten is not to prostrate, to sink and debase; it is to elevate their understandings. The understandings of men were prostrate in their former state of ignorance, superstition and idolatry; christianity was introduced to raise them up from their prostrate state, to give them new light and life and joy. In the case of the unhappy maniac the understanding is completely prostrated; but where reason remains it is ignorance, error and superstition alone can prostrate the understanding. Christian humility has nothing in it degrading or debasing; but it seems not possible for the understanding to be prostrated without degradation and debasement. Knowledge, and above all true christian knowledge raises the understanding. To persuade men to prostrate their understandings is mere priestcraft; for when they have so degraded themselves, and no longer dare to use their reason, or have any judgment of their own, they are prepared to receive any dogmas, however absurd, and to submit to any religious domination, which they to whom they look up as their spiritual guides may wish to exercise over them. Touched with the wand of sacerdotal authority, their souls are benumbed, and they voluntarily continue slaves, because they dare not be free! Priestcraft has bewitched them; bound it its chains, they cannot dissolve the fascinating charm which holds them in slumber of ignorance and error; because they dare not use the noble faculty which distinguishes them from the brutes, lest it should lead them into error, and so far are they deluded as to imagine, that this mental bondage, and wretched self-degradation, is christian humility! O! infatuated beings, did your heavenly Father send his beloved Son to take you out of the hands of heathen priests, merely to place you under the care of new masters? Is this the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free? Did he bring you the light and all the blessings and privileges of the gospel, and die for you, that your under-

standings might lie prostrate, and your souls be enslaved by the dogmas and domination of a self-constituted christian priesthood? Awake from your slumber, break your fetters, and walk at liberty, loving the law of your God.

The craft of priests has turned almost every thing in religion into mystery; which has enabled them to keep the people in darkness, and to maintain their own power and consequence: and by the use they have made of the word mystery, they have succeeded in inducing multitudes to lay aside, in whole or in part, the use of their reason in religion, and to prostrate their understandings to the creeds and dogmas of men as fallible as themselves. Mystery is the first name said to be written on the forehead of the symbolical personage, described in the Apocalypse, as the mother of harlots, and of the abominations which have prevailed under the christian name. This is a striking circumstance, and deserves the most serious consideration. It evidently shows that mystery belongs essentially to priestcraft among professed christians, that it is a leading mark of the antichristian priesthood, one of the main engines by which that priesthood works, and carries into effect its nefarious projects: indeed a thousand facts might be adduced to show that this has actually been the case. Not only have the plain facts and simple doctrines of christianity been turned into and called mysteries; but also the plain institutions, of Jesus Christ, and a variety of occurrences in the evangelical history; until mystery like a veil, has been wrapped about the whole system, enveloping it in darkness, and hiding its excellency and beauty from mankind. The advocates for unscriptural and irrational doctrines, and superstitious practices, when closely assailed, and pressed with rational arguments, have made mystery their *dernier* resort and refuge: when incapable of either explaining or defending their absurd dogmas, they have cried MYSTERY, and hid themselves in its darkness.

The use made of the word mystery continues to be one of the most successful arts of priestcraft. So long as men can be persuaded that religion is a mystery, or at least that its leading and essential doctrines are too mysterious to be understood, and that it is profane and dangerous to bring such

sacred mysteries to the scrutiny of reason that at the peril of their salvation they must believe them without understanding them, they will not dare to examine and judge for themselves, the priests may bring them to credit almost any thing, how absurd soever it may be: the absurd and self-contradictory doctrines which have been credited, might be urged as a proof of this.

It is hardly possible to conceive of any thing better calculated to set aside the use of reason in religion, and to lay the understandings of men prostrate in the dust, than to persuade them that religion is full of inexplicable mysteries. If they believed this they would not attempt to reason on the subject, blind confidence and implicit faith would naturally follow: having once ceased to use their reason the dogmas of the priest would be received as sacred oracles. Whether those dogmas were delivered as interpretations of scripture or deductions from scripture, or as the decrees of popes and councils, in either case the implicit believer builded his faith upon mere human authority. If on the contrary the people believed religion to be a plain subject, in all its essential parts on a level with the common sense of mankind, and continued to use their reason in judging of all they read or heard about it; the priest might declaim and dogmatize, he would obtain no credit any further than what he said was found by the hearers to be reasonable and scriptural: they would hold fast their rights and liberties, and continue to judge and act for themselves. The gospel, in teaching a plain religion, which any man of common sense may understand and practice, is most fatal to priestcraft in all its forms, so far as that gospel is attended to and received in its simplicity and purity: consequently, it showed no little art, in those who assumed the character of christian priests to turn this plain religion into a system of inexplicable mystery; as it was the only way to establish and preserve their consequence and power. All such arts the real ministers of Christ abhor, and, with simplicity and godly sincerity, they will speak the truth as it is in Jesus; neither seeking power, nor any worldly object; but the glory of God and the salvation of men.

R. WRIGHT.

(To be continued.)

LORD BYRON.

To the Editors of the Christian Reflector.

GENTLEMEN,

It had always been represented to me that Unitarians were persons of liberality—that they were the admirers of genius—the lovers of literature—and that however they might differ from others in opinion, they yet could respect

the conscientious inquirer. Judge then of my disappointment on having pointed out to me an article in the leading periodical of that denomination, which as it seems to me introduces the name of Lord Byron for the sole purpose of aiding in the unrighteous cry against him and his writings which has been set up by those who worship things as they are. As the article to which I allude, which appeared in the Monthly Repository for April, has hitherto passed unnoticed, I am justified I conceive, though unwillingly, in supposing it conveys the sentiments of the Unitarian body generally. Happy shall I be in finding my opinion incorrect, for I had I confess looked to the Unitarians as the pioneers in the march of the human intellect, and little had I deemed that they would be found joining in "the cant" which the noble individual mentioned has so well exposed as characteristic of the age in which we live.

The writer of the article on which I feel bound to animadvert, says, he "dare not express admiration" of Lord Byron, albeit he be "unwilling to join the ranks of those that from such different motives raise their voices against him." But is not this, in fact, playing the game of the adversary more completely, though less manfully, than if he had expressed unqualified disapprobation? It is the weak, the trimming spirit which wraps itself up in insinuations which it feels it "dare not" openly charge on its victim. "The injury which he *may* have done to society by his writings." "MAY have done!" If "your *if* is a great peacemaker," your *may* is a direct opposite. Give me the man who "dare not" shelter himself behind such subterfuges, and who if he have any fault to find with an individual boldly challenges him with his misdeeds, and does not skulk behind the convenient shelter of the subjunctive mood. Had the article been written by an avowed enemy of Lord Byron, it could not have been more effectual as a stabbing of character. Had the intention of its author been to assist "the holy alliance" drawn out against the ranks of the illustrious patriot and poet, he could not have executed his task more ably.

I pass over the exquisite criticism on the passage from Lord Byron's works, with the observation, that it is worthy of any one who "dare not express admiration," of Lord Byron, but only of such an one. If there be "thick darkness" in Lord Byron's note, the commentary on it may reasonably be styled the palpable obscure. Wise indeed must be the man who could not perceive that the noble writer was not gravely reasoning in reply to Mr. Canning's argument, but that it was a satire on the political christianity both of him and his saintly coadjutor, Wilberforce. Whether "any christians *believe* that Christ was crucified that black men might be scourged," I pretend not to affirm, but to me it appears to be only a very natural *inference* from the defences set up for slavery from the bible.

As to the alleged unbelief of Lord Byron, his own affirmation

to the contrary ought to set that point at rest. I cannot however but protest against the injustice with which that individual has been treated, in the constancy with which every character drawn by his magic pen in which evil qualities have been traced, has been referred to as a sketch of his own life and conversation. Were all poets, all historians, all clergymen even, to be thus treated, what would become of the bright visions of fancy, the facts of life, the interests of morality? No minister could then pourtray an evil character in his sermons, because it would be instantly said, "the picture is true, for he draws from his own life." The absurdity of the inference in the latter case is not greater than the gross iniquity of the treatment experienced in the former instance. There are two passages in Byron's works which now strike my mind, without referring to any others, which militate decidedly against the notion of his unbelief. For as to his Cain, if he be held liable for all the sentiments therein expressed, what fate shall we assign to Milton? His character of the Devil is evidently the most highly wrought part of his *Paradise Lost*.

"Yet if, as holiest men have deem'd, there be
A land of souls beyond that sable shore,
To shame the doctrine of the Sadducee
And Sophists madly vain of dubious lore;
How sweet it were in concert to adore
With those who made our mortal labors light,
To hear each voice we feared to hear do more,
Behold each mighty shade revealed to sight,
The Bactrian, Samian sage, and all who taught the right."
Childe Harold, canto II.

"If that high world which lies beyond
Our own; surviving lore endears;
If there the cherished heart be fond,
The eye the same except in tears—
How welcome those untrodden spheres!
How sweet this very hour to die!
To soar from earth and find all fears
Lost in thy sight—Eternity."

"It must be so: 'tis not for self
That we so tremble on the brink;
And striving to o'erleap the gulph,
Yet cling to being's severing link.
Oh! in that future let us think
To hold each heart the heart that shares,
With them the immortal waters drink,
And soul in soul grow deathless theirs!"

Hebrew Melodies.

The writer concludes by intimating a hope that Lord Byron may derive consolation from the pure truths of the gospel, and may "become in a higher sense than he has yet been, the admiration and ornament of his species." There is here an admission that Lord Byron *has been* "the admiration and ornament of his species," or else there could not be room for the *higher sense* in which he may *become* so. Then is not the writer

one "of his species" that he "dare not express admiration" at this "ornament" of it. See here how the time-serving plans of man lead to confusion and contradiction. "Honesty is the best policy." Whether Lord Byron previously to his lamented death enjoyed those consolations which christianity affords her votaries, is a matter which lies between him and the God who made him. The last *actions* of his life were more practically christian than those of many who hug themselves with their superiority over this celebrated individual. If our neighbor be the suffering man, whether in England or Attica, Byron's was the part of the good Samaritan, and for this his memory shall be blessed, when the stone of emptiness shall be placed on that of those who could not part even with their guinea for the cause of christian independence in Greece. Whited sepulchres!

I "dare not" then withhold my admiration both of Lord Byron and of his writings, because I deemed him one of the master spirits of the human race, his works have improved and gladdened many a solitary and social hour, his last deeds were truly glorious, and he was "the admiration and ornament of his species." Let those who affect to deprecate and despise him, imitate his virtues, and try to leave the world better than they found it.

Though it may be unpleasant to you, Sirs, to insert these remarks in your publication, as they may be construed by malignant spirits in an improper way, yet I feel obliged in gratitude and in justice to the memory of Byron to request their insertion from your impartiality, and am, A LIBERAL.

Religious Intelligence.

On Sunday June 6th, the Meeting House erected by the Unitarian christians of Todmorden for the worship of the one God the Father was opened by the Rev. Dr. Philipps of Sheffield who conducted the morning service and delivered a discourse on pure and spiritual worship. The Rev. W. Stevens preached in the afternoon a most admirable sermon on "Christ crucified"; and the Rev. G. Harris of Bolton took the evening worship. The congregations were crowded, especially in the afternoon and evening.

On Monday the Annual Association of the Methodist Unitarians assembled.—Dr. Philipps preached in the morning and Mr. Harris at night. At two o'clock 92 persons, male and female sat down to an economical dinner, Dr. Philipps in the chair. John Ashworth, reported the state of Newchurch, congregation numerous and regular, 320 children in the schools, and £170 remaining debt on the chapel.

H. Clarke spoke for Pidiham, congregation increasing, about 200 children taught, and the debt on the chapel about £60.

J. Taylor addressed the meeting for Rochdale; congregation large when all assembled, more than 250 children instructed, and at Lanehead a branch school of 150 more; debt on the chapel and schools, which it is earnestly hoped the public will contribute towards liquidating, as Rochdale is a most important station and the people well deserving of support, between £6 and £700.

E. Ashworth spoke for Rawtenstall; this was formerly an Antinomian Baptist interest, but minister and people have embraced Unitarianism; small society, but maintain a school of 60 children, and there is a debt, which for the members is heavy, of £20.

W. Duffield, addressed the company for Oldham; congregation in a fluctuating state; about 30 children educating, and the debt near £70.

J. Clegg and J. Fielden spoke for Todmorden; congregation in a flourishing condition, Meeting House cost about £900 in building—the society and friends in the neighborhood have raised nearly £400 towards this sum, and the collections at the opening were £65.

The Greengate society, Salford, and the Blackburn congregation were added to the association at the request of the respective parties.

Thursday in Whitsuntide week, 1825, was appointed for the next Annual meeting to be held at Newchurch; the Rev. J. G. Robberds of Manchester and Mr. Harris were unanimously invited to be the preachers.

The meeting was also addressed by Dr. Philipps, Rev N. Jones, and Messrs. Brandreth, A. Aspden, F. Boardman, F. Duffield, Ashton, Fitzsimmons, and Harris. Every individual appeared to be gratified by the encouraging prospect which is presented by the present state of the cause at Todmorden. May their expectations be more than realized.

The General Baptists Annual Assembly was held at the Chapel in worship Street, London, on Tuesday morning June 8th. The Rev. R. Wright of Trowbridge preached an excellent sermon from the 45th Psalm, 16v. in which he pointed out the zeal and earnestness, the love of truth and liberty which characterised their predecessors, and dwelt upon the fact that similar qualities are as essential now as they were in the old time. At the conclusion of the service the business of the assembly was conducted. The members afterwards dined together at the White Hart, Bishopsgate Street; there were about sixty present, Mr. Wright in the chair.

Wednesday, June 9th, was the Annual meeting of the subscribers and friends to the Unitarian Fund. The meeting was held in the new Unitarian chapel, South Place, Finsbury. There was a numerous congregation to hear the Rev. J. G. Robberds of Manchester deliver an admirable discourse on the nature, means, and signs of conversion, from James v. 18, 19. The Rev. W. J. Fox, the Secretary to the Fund read an interesting report of its proceedings during the past year. £100 was voted to W. Roberts the native Unitarian preacher at Madras for his services for the year, which vote was resolved to be annually continued. A proposal

of a most important nature (which will realize we trust all the best expectations of the plan proposed in the Dissenter, No. 1) was brought forward to unite in one society, the Unitarian Fund, the Unitarian association, and the Unitarian Book societies, and a committee was appointed to consider of the propriety of the measure. The friends of the Fund afterwards dined together at the London Tavern Mr. Taylor of Norwich in the chair. About 250 persons were present.

The Unitarian Association held its Annual meeting on Thursday morning, June 10th, when the report of the committee for the past year was read, and several interesting remarks made on the absurd prosecution of the sellers of what are called blasphemous publications.

The Annual meeting of the Christian Tract Society was held in the afternoon of the same day, and its members celebrated the anniversary by a public dinner, John Smith, Esq. M. P. in the chair. Two of the South American Deputies, the late President of the Portuguese Cortes, and Mr. Buckingham the Editor of the Oriental Herald, as well as many other distinguished friends of education and freedom were present. It was a very animated meeting; and the individuals previously named addressed the company, as did the Revds. Aspland, Fox, Madge, Robberds &c. These must indeed have been interesting meetings; and we hail them as a pledge of better things to come.

The following is Mr. Fox's speech delivered on the occasion, as it appeared in The Morning Chronicle.

Mr. Fox, in returning thanks, said that he certainly had not expected to have been honoured in so flattering a manner, and he trusted that the meeting would consequently excuse his being unprepared for the occasion. It was impossible, however, for any one with the feelings of a man, and the principles of a Christian, not to have his passions excited when they saw the manner in which any attempt at liberal discussion was met in this country. The poor of the land were those who had drawn blanks in the lottery of human life, and who came into the world in outward form, the same as other men, but in fact with their very muscles and sinews mortgaged to the service of the rich, who inherited the produce of the land. If he had been preaching in St. Giles, or among the poor, he would not have stated these truths, for it would but have served to excite in their bosoms heart-burnings and jealousies, but when he found himself in a company of gentlemen, most of whom probably inherited something from their forefathers, he felt it to be his duty to state those things, that they might at least perceive the unfairness, after having deprived the poor of their other rights, of depriving them of their right of thinking. It was to that that they looked as their great privilege, as the only thing that set them on a level with the rich and the overbearing [applause]; but when that was taken away, they were indeed sunk to a most humiliating posture; and, after all, it was so thoroughly useless to attempt to put down, by punishment and persecution, those free opinions which every heart could not help forming, and which, consequently, every mouth felt that it had a right to utter; that was not the way to meet the powerful arguments and opinions that had been brought forward by the eminent infidels who had written in the last century: it was not by the word blasphemy that they could overthrow the acute, the argumentative, and the brilliant mind of a Voltaire, many of whose writings, he would own, excited aversion and disgust, in his mind, but whose power of intellect, he thought, could not be denied, and whose stately march of tragic verse excited the warmest admiration, and whose wit, that flowed in perpetual streams through his pages, acted, as it were, as skillful riddlers that shot, at every moment, a prejudice through the heart. The word blasphemy was not sufficient to put down the acute reasonings of Paine, whose works must be combated by a different process than mere declamation: the author of *The Rights of Man* was too potent a reasoner to be met by verbosity; and to bring the thoughts of the company to a nearer, and, perhaps, a dearer example, it was not a word or even a sentence that could check the fiery effusions of opinion that had been put forth by a man and a poet whom they had lately lost, and who had endeared himself to all the civilized world by his conduct towards Greece, and by exposing the cant of this canting age; the way to oppose all this, was not the Chancery way of allowing piracy, and the invasion of property in every immoral and illegal way; the way to oppose infidelity was not by levying fines, and incarcerating in dungeons, and inflicting punishments more severe and prolonged than those that were inflicted on the worst of crimes [loud applause]: this might be the legal way, but it was not the conscientious way; it had been recently said, that England had ceased to be a Christian country, for it had granted, by Mr. Smith's bill, extension of toleration to Unitarians; but though it was false in this particular, yet he did not think it was altogether a mistake, so long as there was one penal law in opposition to religious opinions, so as not to allow every man that had his own opinion in his heart, expressing it with his tongue, and publishing it with his pen, in despite of lawyers and their fees. Nor did he think that this country could attain the title of a Christian country till it altered its behavior abroad as well as at home. He would not believe it to be so, till due honour was done to those noble creatures who had been obliged to fly from their native countries, Spain and Portugal, to seek liberty of opinion in a distant country, nor till we rendered assistance copious and

doubtful to that best of all causes—the cause of Civil and Religious Liberty, as it was contended for in Greece; nor till in our colonies men were allowed to read of the Israelites being delivered from Egyptian bondage, without being accused of sedition and treason; nor while this country allowed trials to take place on religious discussion, and endeavoured to give them a political feeling. There was much, therefore, to be done, but he did not despair of seeing it done even in his own time, while he found already so many noble spirits anxious to patronise freedom, and to give their own example to the rest of the community; then, he trusted, would England live in permanency of her institutions, and glory in the prosperity and happiness of her children, and in the page of history her name should be inscribed in the purest and most splendid glory [loud applause].

PROVINCIAL MEETING.

The general meeting of the ministers of Lancashire and Cheshire was held at Altringham, on the 17th June; it was numerous and respectfully attended, 27 ministers were present. The Rev. W. Hincks, of Liverpool, conducted the devotions, and the Rev. J. Gaskell, preached an excellent sermon, from Eph. v. 1. After the sermon the business of the society was transacted; and it was agreed that in future a regular record of the transactions of the society should be kept, and the Rev. B. R. Davis was appointed the secretary, and the Rev. W. Tate was chosen supporter for the ensuing year.

The Report of the Missionary Society was read, which was upon the whole encouraging; the Rev. W. Duffield was chosen secretary, and Mr. F. Boardman, treasurer, instead of the Rev. T. C. Holland and Mr. Hall, who resigned.

It is much to be regretted that the tickets were fixed at so high a price, 3s. 6d for dinner only, as many would be, on that account, prevented attending, we should have supposed that 3s., including every thing, would have been amply sufficient on such an occasion.

Sixth Anniversary of the Liverpool Great Cross Hall Street Unitarian Christian Congregation, now Meeting in Hunter Street.

THE Sixth Anniversary of this Society was held on the evening of the 24th June, when about eighty persons sat down to a frugal repast, which was provided by Mr. Pegram, at the expence of one shilling and sixpence each, including every thing. Mr. F. B. Wright was called to the Chair. To say that the evening was spent in a very pleasant and agreeable manner, is saying very little. The sentiments given from the Chair were of that kind which inspired not only greatness of thought, but which called forth a flow of eloquence from various speakers, whose minds were in tune, and who spoke out of the abundance of the heart. At Eleven o'clock the meeting concluded with singing and prayer; and we must say we never witnessed a happier or more interesting meeting of the Society at any former Anniversary. All were gratified, all were pleased, and all retired fully satisfied with, and we hope improved by, the evening's entertainment.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W. G.; *A Constant Reader*; *G.*, and several other favors are received, and shall have due attention.

Amicus, *Q.* and *R. W.* are received, and each in order shall have due attention.

We regret that we have been compelled to a mere notice of the Provincial Meeting, our pages being so fully occupied before the report came to hand; we shall with pleasure insert it at full in our next.

The Christian Reflector,

AND THEOLOGICAL INQUIRER.

"I speak as unto wise men; judge ye what I say." PAUL.

No. 60. LIVERPOOL, AUGUST 1st, 1824. Price 4½d.

BIBLICAL CRITICISM.

PROVERBS XIX. 23.

"The fear of the Lord tendeth to life, and (he that hath it) shall abide satisfied." Perhaps, "he that is replenished with it shall abide (safe);" which is more agreeable to the Hebrew; and then there would be no occasion for any insertion. Chald. *qui satiatur ab eo pernoctabit*. So Syr. ܠܒ, (*lun*) signifies sometimes to "abide secure." See Ps. xci. 1. Ps. xlix. 12.

PROVERBS XX. 22.

"The fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion; whoso provoketh him to anger, sinneth against his own soul." Very improperly translated—"the fear of a king." Rather, "the terror produced by his threatenings. LXX ἀπειλή (*apeilee*). But whoso provoketh him, may not sin against his own soul. Sin is a wilful breach of the law of God; and it may be sometimes necessary for a person who would preserve a good conscience to provoke, i. e. displease, a king by disobeying his commands, when they are contrary to the law of God; for the commands of God are to be obeyed in preference to the orders of all the kings of the earth. Such a man then sins not against his own soul; but he may offend against his own life, as the word נפש (*nepešh*) ought to have been translated, i. e. expose it to danger and death, as was the case of Daniel and his companions, and of many other good men. Our version tends to mislead the reader; better then, "the terror," or, "threatening of a king is as the roaring of a lion; whoso provoketh him to anger, offends against his own life," i. e. endangers his life.

See Commentaries and Essays, vol. ii. p. 408.

ON ORDINATIONS.

To the Editors of the Christian Reflector.

GENTLEMEN,

I desire to offer to your notice a few remarks upon a delicate subject; upon the ordination of christian ministers; not however that ordination in which a number of christian ministers come together, to ape the apostles, by the laying on of hands, and by pretending to communicate the Holy Spirit; but upon what I conceive to be a spurious kind of ordination, a something which is not, properly, ordination, although it is *called* ordination.

For myself, I cannot discover what benefit a minister can derive from such a service; does he wish to be instructed in the duties which are incumbent upon him, and in what manner to conduct himself in the solemn and important office to which he is called, let him open the New Testament and read how his great master conducted himself, and what duties he performed during his ministry; does this not suffice, let him turn to the Acts of the Apostles, and read how Peter, John, Paul, and the rest of the apostles, spoke, reasoned, acted, and suffered; and does he still require more, let him turn to St. Paul's two epistles to Timothy; there he will be instructed what doctrines to preach, and what principles of morality to enforce; there he will be taught, not to consider himself as a priest set over the people to have dominion over their faith, but as a brother designed to be a helper of their joy; there he will learn, not to receive his opinions from an older minister who is as fallible as himself, but to study the scriptures which "are able to make" both him and his flock "wise unto salvation;" and there he will learn not to trouble his people with "old wives fables" and "endless genealogies," but to strive with all his might to preserve their minds from every corrupt doctrine, every superstitious practice, and every vicious habit which abounds in this age and country, and which is described by the apostle in these epistles: in short there is no duty incumbent upon him as a minister, which is not as clearly, as impressively, as justly enforced in the pages of the New

Testament, as it can be by the most virtuous, pious, enlightened, and venerable minister of the present day.

But, gentlemen, the service *may* do harm, it may cause the young and inexperienced minister to suppose that he is something more than he was before; that his person is more sacred or his opinions more infallible; that he has more authority to stand by the sick couch and declare the promises of the gospel; that he has more authority to baptize, or to officiate at the Lord's supper; or that he is more justified in wearing a black gown during his public ministrations than he was before the performance of the service: and if all, or any of these be the effects of the ceremony, does it not produce positive evil? And when was there an ordination by which one or other of these effects was not produced?

Again, in having the advice of an older minister, the young man requires two things, first, that his adviser be fully acquainted with the doctrines of the gospel, and the duties of the christian ministry; and secondly, that he be faithful in declaring those doctrines and duties; allowing however that his integrity be undoubted, is there no possibility of his recommending the observance of unscriptural ceremonies, or the preaching of unscriptural doctrines? and is there no possibility of his neglecting to enforce some of the duties of the ministry? Yea, verily, so long as man is liable to err, so long there is a possibility. Why then should any young minister seek a fallible adviser, whilst he is in possession of one infallible?

I might proceed to show the injurious tendency of such exhibitions upon the less informed part of our congregations, and upon thinking men of other sects, had I not already occupied a sufficient space in your valuable pages. The above ideas have been suggested partly in consequence of some expressions used by your valued correspondent Mr. R. Wright, in his remarks on the christian ministry, published in a former number of the Reflector; and partly in consequence of being informed that an ordination is shortly to take place in one of the Unitarian chapels of the county of Lancaster. I have called this a delicate subject, and so it is, for the practice had the approbation of the enlightened Dr. Priestley, for whose opinions

I have a high respect; but at the same time I believe that he would have been as desirous as I can possibly be, that it should be brought to the test of reason and of scripture. Should any one reply to this communication, I hope he will commence by pointing out in what part of the New Testament any ceremony such as that practised amongst Unitarians, and by them denominated ordination, is either sanctioned or enjoined. And now, gentlemen, you will probably give me credit for veracity, when I declare that I am neither priest nor minister, but, your constant reader, and

AN ENEMY TO PRIESTCRAFT.

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY DEFENDED, AND PRIESTCRAFT EXPLODED.

(Continued from page 162)

Sect. 7. Human standards of faith.—Proscription of free inquiry:—Unscriptural terms of communion.—Tyranny over the understanding and conscience.

1. Jesus, the only divinely appointed Lord of christians, erected the standard of christian faith; he alone was commissioned and qualified to do it; what he taught and commanded, his disciples and followers are bound to receive; but what men have since added to it, should be regarded as of no authority in religion; allegiance to him requires the rejection of such unauthorised additions to the faith taught by the divinely constituted Head of the christian church. Neither Emperors, nor Kings, nor Popes, nor any other order of Ecclesiastics, nor Councils, nor Parliaments, nor Synods, nor any other description of persons whatsoever, can have authority to make creeds or articles of faith for christians, or to alter or add to the standard of faith which Jesus Christ set up; for God has given them no such authority, and the assumption of it is daring usurpation. The[real] ministers of Christ will pretend to no such authority; nor can they, consistently with their allegiance to Jesus, their only master, acknowledge such authority when as-

sumed by others; though a fiery furnace awaited them, their duty requires them to risk being cast into it, like the true worshipers who would not bow to the golden image which King Nebuchadnezzar set up, rather than submit to mere human authority in matters of faith and conscience. Their business is to teach what Jesus revealed, taught, and commanded, without either adding or diminishing; it will be their study to understand this, and to communicate the knowledge of it to others; nor dare they teach for doctrines the commandments of men. It matters not to them on what human authority any doctrine may rest, how popular it may be, what antiquity it may boast, what honor or emolument may be attached to the profession and teaching of it, if it be not found in the New Testament, they dare not admit it as an article of christian faith; nor dare they deny, or conceal, what they perceive to have been taught by their exalted master, though it may not only be unpopular, but proscribed by human authority, and denounced as heresy and blasphemy, and though the profession of it should subject them to pains and penalties. They may err in judgment; but they will not knowingly add to or take from the true doctrine of Christ, nor misconstrue his words. This strict adherence to what Jesus taught and commanded, and assertion of his exclusive authority in matters of faith, may be regarded as a mark of the true and faithful ministers of Christ. Very different from this has the conduct of priests been. To have maintained the exclusive authority of Jesus Christ, would have left no room for *them* to exercise authority in matters of faith, for their domination in religion. Not contented with things as Christ and his apostles left them, they formed creeds and articles of faith, and set them up as standards of what christians ought to believe, and insisted on the belief of them as essential to salvation: and when they have not formed creeds and articles for themselves, they have adopted those formed by others, and substituted them in the place of the plain declarations of the New Testament, as a rule by which men should regulate their religious profession and conduct. They have generally been lavish of their censures and condemnation of those who

would not receive their unauthorized dogmas, which they have had the arrogance to denominate the true faith ; and have frequently fulminated their anathemas against all who dared to deny their authority, by rejecting the creeds and articles of faith which they had devised, or adopted. When they had influence enough to make the civil power subservient to their views, and the demon of persecution was let loose, confiscation of goods, bonds, imprisonment, torture, and the most cruel deaths, awaited those who dared to keep their allegiance to Christ unbroken, to maintain the exclusive authority of the new Testament in matters of religion, and to lift up their voice against priestly usurpation. Even where civilization and liberal principles have so far prevailed, as to render the extreme of persecution impracticable, penal laws, civil disqualifications, and in some instances, fines and imprisonment, have been thought necessary to guard and protect the spurious christianity of the priests : it is certain, genuine christianity can never either need or accept of such modes of defence ; for it is in itself invaluable and imperishable.

No proof can be given that genuine christianity ever was a persecuting religion ; indeed no species of persecution can ever be reconciled with its essential principles, its true spirit and holy precepts. It was as human creeds were formed and articles of faith adopted in other language than that of Jesus and his apostles, as priestcraft crept in, and professed christians had something to defend which is not to be found in the New Testament, that they became persecutors ; whenever they have been such it will be found, on examination, they had some human creed, written or understood, some unscriptural articles of faith to defend. The devising and adopting other standards of belief besides the New Testament, is an invasion of the prerogatives which God hath given to his beloved Son, whom he hath constituted the only master of christians, a virtual denial of the sufficiency of the New Testament, an assumption of dominion over the faith and consciences of those who are required to bow to such standards, and may be regarded as part of the craft of priests to subject the understandings and consciences

of men to their sway. What arrogance and presumption, to take upon themselves to determine how others shall think, what they shall believe and profess, as the disciples and followers of Christ !

2. Jesus and his apostles left the minds and consciences of men perfectly free. They plainly declared the truth, exhibited its evidences, appealed to the reason of those who heard them, and left every one to judge and decide for himself. They offered no insult to the understanding, nor ever attempted to force the conscience. Fully satisfied of the truth of what they taught, of the goodness of the cause in which they were engaged, confident of the patronage of heaven, and the final triumph of christianity as they made it known, they feared not the attacks of its adversaries, they had nothing to dread from free inquiry, they sought not the patronage of worldly power, nor did they seek a momentary and merely seeming advantage, by putting down their opponents by mere force, and refusing to listen to their arguments and objections. On the contrary, they did all they could to excite inquiry and examination, and called on those whom they addressed, to prove all things, to judge of what they said. It was not the first teachers of christianity, but the unbelieving Jews, with their priests and rulers, who dreaded free inquiry, and attempted to stop the mouths of the apostles by threatenings, and to put them down by the strong arm of power. In imitation of their great master, and his divinely commissioned messengers, the true and faithful ministers of Christ, strong in their convictions of truth, and in the goodness of their cause, relying on the support and blessing of the Almighty, so far from shrinking from free inquiry will do all they can to excite and promote it, nor will they so far dishonor the good cause which they advocate, as to defend it with carnal weapons, or silence its opposers by coercion. But the plan pursued by Jesus and his apostles will not do for what is called the christian priesthood : conscious that their dogmas will not bear the test of reason, nor endure the scrutiny of free inquiry, that men may not escape from the yoke of their domination, nor break from the chains which bind

their souls, they do all they can to prevent inquiry. Though genuine christianity, so far from suffering, would be promoted, if men inquired freely, and impartially examined every subject, their mysterious creeds, and absurd dogmas, and with them their consequence, and spiritual domination, would be exposed, exploded, and cast to the moles and the bats. They would have the people receive implicitly what they teach, rely on their instructions, rather than use their own understandings and follow the dictates of their own judgment; and if they exhort them to read and examine it is only such books as are favorable to their own system; they cannot allow the propriety of their inquiring freely, and hearing evidence and argument on all sides. They pretend to be concerned for the interests of religion and the good of souls, to fear that free inquiry would lead men into fatal errors, and so to destruction! As if free inquiry was not calculated to promote the knowledge of truth; or as if truth was not the basis of religion. As if mental activity was more dangerous and destructive than benumbing ignorance and mental and moral torpidness, which it destroys. Whatever they pretend, is there not reason to think, that, what they are really concerned about, is, the preservation of their own influence, power and advantage? Is it possible for the advocates of priestly domination to be real friends to free inquiry? Is it possible for them to help seeing that it is calculated to subvert such domination? Before the presumption of proscribing any of the rights of individual judgment, and of judging for others what they are to believe be allowed to any set of men, they ought to give good proof of their superior wisdom, that they are more infallible than others, this is necessary to give any color to their proud claims.

3. Our Lord and the first teachers of the word, who founded the primitive churches, left the communion of christians open and free; all who professed faith in Christ, the belief that he was the Messiah, were received as members of those societies, and admitted to all christian privileges; nor were any excluded but for immorality, or brought under reproof but for unchristian conduct. Churches were then temples of liberty, and all who

chose to unite with them enjoyed the privileges of the free-born sons of God. Christians were all on the footing of brethren, and the bond which united them was the spirit of Christ, meekness, humility and love. The ministers of Christ, in every age are required to act upon the same liberal plan, to watch over and promote the liberties of their brethren, never to sanction or countenance any unscriptural terms of communion, or any plans of discipline which would violate christian privileges, or trench on the liberty wherewith Christ hath made all his disciples free.

To secure their usurped dominion, the pretended successors of the apostles, have introduced terms of communion unauthorized by the New Testament, and incompatible with the liberty enjoyed by the primitive christians. What is here stated is particularly applicable to the state of things among many dissenters. To keep the people in the fetters of the received creed, whether written or not, and the dogmas of the sect, none are suffered to become members of their churches, or admitted to the Lord's supper, but on certain prescribed terms, for which terms neither precept nor precedent can be found in the New Testament. The candidate for admission must make a confession of his belief of the received creed, or dogmas of the party: and, in many instances, he must relate an experience, which measures according to the standard fixed by human authority: in some churches he must also become a conformist to all the ceremonies, and plans of discipline and government, which the church to which he unites, or its ministers, have thought proper to adopt: and all these terms are exacted by what is called the authority of Christ which he hath given to his church, but which is exercised chiefly, if not entirely, by the minister. Is there no priestcraft, no religious domination, in all this? Is there nothing like acting the master in matters of faith and conscience, on the one part, and like bowing to human authority, bowing the neck to a yoke of bondage, on the other? Where in the New Testament is it said that Christ hath given his authority to any church or minister, to be exercised in such cases as the above? Who can impartially review what takes place even among some dissenters

without being convinced that priestcraft and popery exist in other churches besides that of Rome ? The unscriptural terms on which persons are admitted to office, as ministers, in established churches, and even to be students in some universities, are two well known and smell too strongly of priestcraft, to require any particular mention ; happy would it be if nothing resembling such binding of conscience in chains, before candidates for the ministry, can be admitted to that office, or even to become students for it, did not exist in any party of dissenters.

4. To prescribe articles of belief, formed by fallible men, acting without any divine mission, or pretensions to a divine mission, and creeds formed by assemblies of ambitious and worldly minded priests or perhaps composed by no one knows who, and to erect them into a standard of faith, by what worldly power soever sanctioned and supported, is evidently to establish an odious and pernicious tyranny in religion. It is to bind the understanding and conscience in chains, to trample on some of the most sacred rights of men and christians, and to invade the prerogatives of that great Being to whom alone dominion over conscience belongs. Those who have been guilty of this gross violation of the most sacred principles, and the most invaluable rights, have misnamed their conduct zeal for God and truth ; as if they were made the guardians of the divine honor, the infallible judges and conservators of religious truth ! What can be a greater insult to God, or outrage of all that is in religion, and dear to man, than the usurpation of such spiritual domination, such lordship over faith and conscience. By proscribing, or even restraining free enquiry, this dominion over faith and conscience is continued and perpetuated, even in an enlightened age : by such steps persons are kept back from using the means which would liberalize their minds, and set their understandings and consciences free. Unscriptural terms of communion, so long as submitted to, tend further to benumb the soul and rivet the chains which hold men in spiritual bondage. Those who enforce such terms make themselves lords in God's house, and convert it into a prison of slaves. Surely, it can-

not be uncandid to say, that all who enforce human standards of faith, who endeavor to prevent free inquiry, and who insist on unscriptural terms of communion, act the part of priests, and carry on a system of priestcraft.

R. WRIGHT.

(*To be continued.*)

ON MORAL BEAUTY.

To the Editors of the Christian Reflector.

GENTLEMEN,

Being an admirer of our great poet Akenside, I have been so much annoyed at noticing a strange criticism on a passage in his *Pleasures of Imagination*, by G. Campbell, D. D. F. R. S., that, as the subject is a moral one, I am induced to trouble you with some remarks upon this splenetic effusion of the learned Principal of the Marischal College, Aberdeen. I shall commence with this aphorism:—whatever is true is good, and whatever is good is beautiful.

“for truth and good are one,
And beauty dwells in them, and they in her,
With like participation.”

In support of this truth the poet annexes, in a note the following beautiful quotation, from, Xenoph. Memorab. Socrat. lib. 3. cap. 8. “Do you imagine,” says Socrates to Aristippus, “that what is good is not beautiful? have you not observed that these appearances always coincide? Virtue, for instance, in the same respect to which we call it good, is ever acknowledged to be beautiful also. In the characters of men we always join the two denominations together. The beauty of human bodies corresponds in like manner with the economy of parts which constitute them good; and in every circumstance of life the same object is constantly accounted both beautiful and good, inasmuch as it answers the purposes for which it was designed.”

“This excellent observation,” Dr. Akenside remarks, has been illustrated and extended by the noble restorer of ancient philosophy, see *the Characteristics*, vol. 2. pp. 339, 422, and

vol. 3. p. 181. And another ingenious author has particularly shown that it holds in the general laws of nature, in the works of art, and the conduct of the sciences. *Inquiry into the original of our ideas of beauty and virtue*, Treat. 1. sect. 8. As to the connection between beauty and truth, there are two opinions concerning it."

"Some philosophers, assert an independant and invariable law in nature, in consequence of which all rational beings must alike perceive beauty in some certain proportions, and deformity in the contrary," or where there are no certain proportions; upon which, Dr. Campbell, in his *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, book 1. ch. 7, sec. 4. has the following remarkable criticism: "Now, though I do not conceive what is meant either [by *independent law*, or by *contrary proportions*, this, if it proves any thing, proves as clearly that deformity and truth are one, as that beauty and truth are one; for those *contrary proportions* are surely as much proportions, or, if you will, as true proportions, as *some certain proportions* are." But, Dr. Akenside, if I understand him rightly, does not say any thing about *contrary proportions*, but he appears to me to say that beauty exists in certain proportions, and that on the contrary, where those proportions do not exist, beauty does not exist, and consequently there is deformity.

Dr. Akenside further observes, "others there are who believe beauty to be merely a relative and arbitrary thing; and that it is not impossible, in a physical sense, that two beings of equal capacities for truth, should perceive, one of them beauty, and the other deformity, in the same relations. And upon this supposition, by that truth which is always connected with beauty, nothing more can be meant than the conformity of any object to those proportions, upon which, after careful examination the beauty of that species is found to depend." "This opinion," says Dr. Campbell, "if I am able to comprehend it, differs only in one point from the preceding. It supposes the standard or law of beauty, not invariable and universal. It is liable to the same objection, and that rather more glaringly; for if the same relations must be always equally *true relations*,

deformity is as really one with truth as beauty is, since the very same relations can exhibit both appearances. In short, no hypothesis hitherto invented hath shown that by means of the discursive faculty, without the aid of any other mental power, we could ever obtain a notion of either the beautiful or the good; and till this be shown, nothing is shown to the purpose. The author aforesaid, far from attempting this, proceeds on the supposition, that we first perceive beauty, he says not how, and then having by a careful examination, discovered the proportions which gave rise to the perception, denominate them *true*; so that all those elaborate disquisitions with which we are amused, amount only to a few insignificant identical propositions very improperly expressed. For out of a vast profusion of learned phrase, this is all the information we can pick that beauty is—truly beauty, and that good is—truly good.”

I wish Dr. Campbell had been able to comprehend it, and then he would have perceived that Dr. Akenside, having previously said, “some philosophers assert that beauty exists in certain proportions,” next observes that “others there are who, believe beauty to be merely a relative and arbitrary thing.” Now, surely, this did not call for all this confused hubbub of criticism, which really, “amounts only to a few insignificant identical phrases very improperly expressed,” because they are founded on a continued misrepresentation, if not a perversion, of Dr. Akenside’s meaning, who justly observes “that two beings of equal capacities for truth,” may have very different notions of beauty, “in a physical sense,” and has shown that the Creator has fixed a different standard of beauty for different minds, for he says, book 1. l. 600.

“nor to all their kinds
 The same in shape or features didst thou frame
 Her image. Measuring well their different spheres
 Of sense and action, thy paternal hand
 Hath for each race prepared a different test
 Of beauty own’d and reverenc’d as their guide
 Most apt, most faithful. Thence informed they scan
 The objects that surround them, and select,
 Since the great whole disclaims their scanty view,
 Each for himself selects peculiar parts
 Of nature, what the standard fix’d by heav’n
 Within his breast approves; acquiring thus
 A partial beauty, which becomes his lot;
 A beauty which his eye may comprehend,
 His hand may copy;”

Dr. Campbell pursues his criticism on this great poet and philosopher, thus, moral good, "says a celebrated writer, 'consisteth in fitness.' From this account any person would at first readily conclude, that morals according to him, are not concerned in the ends which we pursue, but solely in the choice of means for attaining our ends; that if this choice be judicious, the conduct is moral; if injudicious, the contrary. But this truly pious author is far from admitting such an interpretation of his words." Why did he use them then? could he not, if he meant differently, have expressed himself differently? but Dr. Campbell says, "*fitness* in his sense hath no relation to a further end. It is an absolute fitness, a fitness in itself." We are obliged to ask, what then is that fitness which you call absolute; for the application of the word in every other case invariably implying the proper direction of means to an end, far from affording light to the meaning it has here, tends directly to mislead us. The only answer, as far as I can learn, that hath ever been given to the question, is neither more nor less than this, "that alone is absolutely fit which is morally good:" so that in saying moral good consisteth in fitness, no more is meant than that it consisteth in moral good!" Now what sort of criticism is this? Dr. Campbell, in his obsolete phraseology, *accuseth* Dr. Akenside of "reasoning perpetually in a circle;" but if Dr. Campbell has not, in this captious and ill-natured criticism, reasoned in a circle, I do not know what reasoning in a circle means; for that which is fit is proper, just, true; and that which is true, is just, proper, fit; so that fitness and truth are one, and as moral good can have no existence without these properties, fitness and good are one, as truth and good are one:—it is all beating about the bush, and means the same thing.

This sort of criticism is unworthy of Dr. Campbell, and is a great blemish to his valuable work; for, who except Dr. Campbell, does not perceive that the poet states two different opinions which are entertained respecting the manner in which we judge of beauty; and, so far from "proceeding upon a supposition that we first perceive beauty, but does not say how, and

then by examining the proportions which gave rise to the perception, denominate them true, he does no such thing, for, as has been shown before, he expressly says that God

"Hath for each race prepared a diff'rent test
Of beauty."

and with respect to moral beauty his quotation from Xenophon distinctly shews that he accorded with that philosopher, that what is good is beautiful, that virtue is beautiful, for "in the characters of men we always join the two denominations together;" the beauty of human bodies and every other object is constantly accounted both beautiful and good, inasmuch as it answers the purposes for which it was intended," but, if deformed by vicious propensities, we never account human bodies either morally beautiful or good, because they do not "answer the purposes for which they were intended."

The poet seems to have anticipated this sort of criticism, for he says, book 3. l. 447.

"on my strain,
Perhaps e'en now some cold fastidious judge
Casts a disdainful eye, and calls my toil,
And calls the love and beauty which I sing,
The dream of folly." Thou, grave censor! say,
Is beauty then a dream, because the glooms
Of dulness hang too heavy on thy sense
To let her shine upon thee?"

G.

To the Editors of the Christian Reflector.

GENTLEMEN,

As you have not inserted my communication on the doctrine of the Atonement, I shall be obliged by your withdrawing it altogether, and substituting the following short series of Letters to a young Calvinistic friend, on the same subject. Yours, truly,

SENEX.

ON THE DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT.

Letter I.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

You wish for my thoughts on an important subject. You wonder that Unitarians should deny the

doctrine of Atonement, or of satisfaction made to divine justice for the sins of men, by the death of Jesus Christ. You say, "there are no other means of acceptance with the divine Being, and no other ground of hope afforded to the sinner, of salvation and deliverance from the wrath of the Almighty." That you should so think and so reason, does not surprise me. I, who like yourself was educated a Calvinist, once thought as you do; but a more careful examination of the New Testament, and an attention to the first principles of christianity led me to change my opinion. There are first principles or axioms in christianity, as there are in every science; and these first principles form the standard, and serve as a test to which we must bring all our opinions and reasonings on the subject. The first principle of religion, whether natural or revealed, is, the existence of a God; for without this be admitted there can be no such thing as religion. The first cause must be independent of all other causes; indeed all other causes must be considered as effects of the first cause. The first cause being independent, must be superior to any influence from secondary causes. He must also be unchangeable, for mutability supposes influence operating to cause a change of design or of action. The first cause must be infinite in all his perfections. His power must be uncontrollable by any other power, his wisdom must exceed that of created intelligences in a degree superior to that in which the ocean exceeds the single dew drop that hangs on a blade of grass. A Being infinitely powerful and wise, must also be infinitely benevolent. Infinite benevolence has for its object the happiness of the beings which infinite power has created. He cannot possibly derive any accession of bliss, nor suffer any diminution of happiness, from the conduct of his creatures.

It being admitted as a first principle in all religion, that there is a God, that he must be independent, infinitely powerful, wise, and benevolent, let us bring the doctrine of the atonement, or satisfaction, to the test of this admitted first principle.

The popular doctrine of atonement proceeds upon the opinion that the sins of men have made a change in the divine

Being, that he is offended with his creatures, that his love is turned into hatred, and that the all-benevolent and merciful Jehovah will not bestow his favors on his creature man, until his wrath be pacified, his justice satisfied by a full, a complete, an infinite satisfaction.

In order to this, it was necessary, on account of man's inability to make this atonement, that one equal to God in power and dignity, should become the sinner's substitute, die in his stead, experience all the wrath and indignation, pain and punishment, which infinite intelligence could devise, and infinite power inflict; a wrath, as some have expressed it, "fiercer than the hottest hell;" a punishment, far exceeding eternal ages of suffering which a creature could sustain. On this condition only, it is asserted, he that made man would, or could consistently with his justice, have mercy on him.

I wish you, my dear friend, to notice that this doctrine represents, nay, it renders necessary, a double change in him who is the *unchangeable*. *First*, he who before his creature sinned was benevolent towards him, was made his enemy by man's transgression; and *secondly*, by the death of an innocent, an almighty, an infinite being, equal to Jehovah himself, Jehovah's "wrath is turned to grace," his favor purchased, and he again smiles upon the works of his hand. Is God a man that he should lie, or the son of man that he should change? If the doctrine of the atonement be true, and the effects said to be produced by the death of Christ on the mind and purposes of the Eternal, be founded in fact, what are we to think of the solemn declarations of God himself:—"I am Jehovah, I change not."? And what of the assertion of the Psalmist, "The Lord is good unto all, and his tender mercies are over all his works."? Of the apostle, "God is love."?

In my future correspondence I shall pursue the subject, as to the nature and history of this doctrine, its supposed foundation in scripture, its influence on the human mind, the ideas it leads us to entertain of the divine character, its moral effects on the virtue and happiness of man here, and its connection with the hope of immortal happiness in the world to come,

which is afforded to the children of men by the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the mean time permit me, my dear friend, to request you to reflect on that first principle of religion to which I have referred, and try your favourite doctrine by that standard.

I am yours, sincerely, SENEX.

REFLECTIONS ON the words, (Eph. v. i.) "Be ye followers of God as dear children;" the text which was chosen by the Preacher at the late Provincial Meeting, held at Altringham, June 17th, 1824.

Yes, "Be followers of God as dear children!" It is the voice of reason, of nature, and of the gospel of Christ. Oh, that all who profess his name, could so hear that voice, that they might obey it in truth and in deed! Then, christians would no longer practise war and foment strife, but would live in harmony and in peace. Then, the invidious distinctions of "higher ranks," and "lower orders," would be lost sight of and forgotten in fraternal affection. Then christian societies would no longer present the anomalous spectacle, of wealth and poverty, splendour and wretchedness. Then, none would riot in profusion, and none would suffer want. Then, christian ministers, while they declared that the kingdom of Christ was not of this world," would shew that it was not, by living superior to worldly maxims. Then, it would no longer be said of them, that they "minded high things," but that they "condescended to men of low estate." Then, while they *preached* against "the pride of life," they would *live* against "the pride of life." Then, the sacerdotal robes, the relics of a priestly age, would be laid aside; and the servant of God would be anxious for no distinctions from his brethren, save that of being "in all things a pattern to them of good works." Then, there would be simplicity of ** practice*, as well as simplicity of *faith*; and all selfish considerations would be cheerfully sacrificed, to promote the general good. Then all would be united as "in one heart and one mind;" and christianity, thus receiving its brightest illustration, would have "free course and be glorified in all the earth." "Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children."

HUMANITAS.

* This I consider to be essential to the purity of christian faith, and the preservation of the true christian spirit. Eusebius, speaking of the degeneracy of christians, in the early ages of christianity, says, "They had begun to live in fine houses and to indulge in luxuries." That the Provincial Meeting is actuated by a similar spirit, I will not presume to say; but is it not exceedingly ungenerous, is it not diametrically opposed to the example of Jesus Christ, continually to fix the price of the dinner according to the standard of the rich, and not according to the standard of the poor?

The Caterer,

No. XVIII.

"Plinius major dicere solebat, nullum esse librum tam malum, ut non aliquâ parte posset prodesse."

A MAHOMETAN SERMON.

Father of all! in every age,
In ev'ry clime ador'd,

By saint, by savage, and by sage,
Jehovah, Jove, or Lord!

POPE.

"I once had," says Mr. Updike Underhill, (an American, who was long a captive in Algiers,) "an opportunity of approaching, unnoticed, the window of one of the principal mosques. After the customary prayers, the priest pronounced the following discourse with a dignified elocution. It was received by his audience with great reverence. It may undoubtedly, suffer from translation and the fickleness of my memory; but the manner in which it was delivered, and the energy of many of the expressions, made so strong an impression, that I think I have not materially varied from the sentiment.—The attributes of the Deity were the subject of the priest's discourse; and after some exordium, he elevated his voice and exclaimed:"

God alone is immortal!—Ibrahim and Soliman have slept with their fathers; Cadijah, the first born of faith; Ayesha, the beloved; Omar, the meek; Omri, the benevolent; the companions of the Apostle, and the sent of God himself, all died; but God most high, most holy, liveth for ever. Infinities are to him as the numerals of arithmetic to the sons of Adam; the earth shall vanish before the decrees of his eternal destiny; but he liveth and reigneth for ever.

God alone is omniscient!—Michael, whose wings are full of eyes, is blind before him. The dark night is unto him as the rays of the morning; for he noticeth the creeping of the smallest ant, in the dark night, upon the black stone, and apprehendeth the motion of an atom in the open air.

God alone is omnipresent!—He toucheth the immensity of space as a point; he moveth in the deep of the ocean, and Mount Atlas, is hidden by the sole of his foot; he breatheth fragrant odours to cheer the blessed in paradise, and enliveneth the pallid flame in the profoundest hell.

God alone is omnipotent!—He thought, and worlds were created; he frowneth, and they dissolve into thin smoke; he smileth, and the torments of the damned are suspended. The thunderings of Hermon are the whisperings of his voice; the rustling of his attire causeth lightning and an earthquake; and with the shadow of his garment he blutteth out the sun.

God alone is merciful!—When he forged his immutable de

crees on the anvil of eternal wisdom, he tempered the miseries of the race of Ismael in the fountains of pity.—When he laid the foundations of the world, he cast a look of benevolence into the abysses of futurity, and the adamantine pillars of eternal justice were softened by the beamings of his eyes. He dropped a tear upon the embryo miseries of unborn man, and that tear, falling through the immeasurable lapses of time, shall quench the glowing flames of the bottomless pit. He sent his prophet into the world to enlighten the darkness of the tribes, and hath prepared the pavilions of the houri for the true believers.

God alone is just!—He chains the latent cause to the distant event, and binds them both immutably fast to the fitness of things. He decreed the unbeliever to wander amid the whirlwind of error, and suited his soul to future torment. He promulgated the ineffable creed; and the germs of countless souls of believers, which existed in the contemplation of Deity, expanded at the sound. His justice refresheth the faithful, while the damned spirits confess it in despair.

God alone is one!—Ibrahim the faithful knew it; Moses declared it amidst the thunderings of Sinai; Jesus pronounced it; and the messenger of God, the sword of his vengeance, filled the world with that immutable truth.

Surely there is *One God, immortal, omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, most merciful and just*; and Mahomet is his Apostle!

Lift your hands to the eternal, and pronounce the ineffable, adorable, creed; *There is One God, and Mahomet is his Prophet.*

Royal Death Bed Scene.

“ABOUT the beginning of May, 1774, Louis 15th, the strength of whose constitution had promised a protracted life, was attacked by a confluent small-pox, of the worst kind. As soon as the king knew with what disorder he was afflicted, he despaired of recovery. The two parties which divided the court, (at the head of one of which was the king's favourite mistress, the Countess du Barry,) attacked each other warmly at the foot of the bed whereon Louis 15th was extended. They fought, it may be said, about the last sighs, and doubtful commands of a dying man. Louis had religious duties to perform. The moment for them, which one party was anxious to hasten, and the other had an interest in delaying, occasioned the most scandalous scenes. At length, on the 10th of May, 1774, the mortal career of Louis 15th, terminated. The whole court went on that day to the castle; the whole palace was filled with courtiers and the inquisitive. The dauphin (afterwards Louis 16th) had settled that he would leave it with the royal family, the moment the king should breathe his last sigh. But upon such an occasion, decency forbade that positive orders for departure should be passed from mouth to mouth. The keepers

of the stables, therefore, agreed with the people who were in the king's room, that the latter should place a lighted taper near a window, and that at the instant of the king's decease, one of them should extinguish it. The taper was extinguished. On this signal, the body guards, pages and equerries, mounted on horseback, and all was ready for setting off. The dauphin was with the dauphiness. They were expecting together the intelligence of the death of Louis 15th. A dreadful noise, absolutely, like thunder, was heard in the outer apartment: it was the crowd of courtiers who were deserting the dead sovereign's anti-chamber, to come and bow to the new power of Louis 16th.* This extraordinary tumult informed Marie Antoinette and her husband that they were to reign.

The Countess de Noailles entered, and was the first to salute Marie Antoinette as Queen of France. At length the carriages drove up, the guards and officers were on horseback. The castle was deserted—every one hastened to fly from a contagion, to brave which no inducement now remained. A few under servants and poor workmen continued with the pestiferous remains of Louis 15th., and paid the last duty to their master.

The whole court set off for Choisy, at four o'clock. The King, the Queen, Monsieur, the King's brother, Madame, and the Count and Countess d' Artois, went in the same carriage. The solemn scene that had just passed before their eyes—the multiplied ideas offered to their imaginations, by that which was just opening, had naturally inclined them to grief and reflection: until a word drolly mangled by the Countess d' Artois, occasioned a general burst of laughter and from that moment they dried their tears."

Madame Campan's Memoirs of the private life of Marie Antoinette.

* On the 8th and 9th the disorder grew worse; and the King beheld the whole surface of his body coming off piecemeal and corrupted. Deserted by his friends, and by that crowd of courtiers which had so long crawled before him, the only consolation presented to him, was the piety of his daughters.

Religious Intelligence.

Mr. Wright's Missionary Life and Labors.

The Subscribers to this Work may expect its appearance now very shortly as the whole is printed off and in the hands of the binder. A delay has been occasioned from various causes, and among the rest, its extension to ONE HUNDRED pages more than was originally contemplated; but for which the Author does not intend to make any advance of price to his Subscribers.

Provincial Meeting.

The general meeting of the ministers of Lancashire and Cheshire was held at Altringham on Monday 17th June, and was numerous and respectably attended, 27 Ministers were present, and many others, whose

sincerity in the support of liberal opinions, has been manifested by a long course of manly exertion and enlightened zeal. The Rev. W. Hincks of Liverpool, conducted the devotional parts of the service, and the Rev. J. Gaskell, of Duckingfield, preached from Eph. v. 1. It was a serious and judicious discourse, intended to show the influence which enlightened views of the truth should have on the minds of those who advocate them, and the additional motives, under which such individuals are placed, to perform with peculiar care the important duties christianity enjoins upon its votaries. The audience was respectable and attentive, and the impression left appeared to be that of the most satisfactory nature—calculated to produce the most pleasing train of thought both as to the present influence, and future extension of the religion of Jesus Christ.

At the close of the service the Rev. C. Wallace, the minister of the place, was called to the chair: the thanks of the meeting were given to the preacher, and it was agreed on, after some discussion as to the mode, that a regular record of the business of the Provincial Meeting should be kept, and the Rev. B. R. Davis was appointed Secretary. The Rev. W. Tate of Chorley was chosen supporter for the ensuing year.

The meeting then proceeded to transact the business of the Missionary Society, the Report of which, was, on the whole encouraging. The Rev. W. Duffield of Manchester was chosen Secretary, and Mr. F. Boardman of the same place, Treasurer; in the room of the Rev. T. C. Holland and Mr. Hall, who resigned. The thanks of the meeting were then voted to the Chairman, and the business closed.

At two o'clock nearly 40 Gentlemen sat down to dinner at the Unicorn Inn, when the Rev. J. Gaskell, as the preacher of the day, presided. After the cloth was withdrawn, the following toasts were given: "The King, and may he never forget the principles which seated his family on the throne," "Civil and religious liberty all over the world;" "The Bishop of Norwich, and the liberal clergy of the established church." "The diffusion of knowledge among the people," and many other sentiments expressive of the wishes of the company for the prevalence of religion, the improvement of mankind, and the rights of freedom.

The meeting was enlivened by the presence of the Rev. J. H. Bransby, of Dunale. That gentlemen with many others continued to give a zest and spirit to the passing hour and its transactions, by the delivery of appropriate addresses, or the communication of interesting facts, till about six o'clock, when, excepting those who remained at Altringham to transact the business of the Widows' Fund next morning, all returned to their respective places of abode, highly gratified with the proceedings of the day.

We are sorry to be compelled to express other feelings than the above, but it is much to be regretted that the tickets of admission to the dinner, were fixed at so high a rate as three shillings and sixpence, without wine, being actually more than six shillings and sixpence with wine; allowing only half a bottle to each individual. It was from this feeling that some individuals (five or six) did not join the assembly till after they had taken a less expensive dinner at another inn; nor could they as consistent and conscientious men avoid thus protesting against what they could not but consider wrong. We mention this, because it is our firm conviction, (*) that this was their only motive. We believe they venerate the moral worth, and fully appreciate the great exertions of many of the members of the Provincial Meeting; but at the same time they reprobate as the emanation of an unkindly spirit, even the wish which would restrict, within narrow bounds, any real good. Feeling that such a general meeting of the friends of religion does possess such a germ of excellence, they are desirous of developing its worth, and evincing its capabilities by a wise and judicious treatment. It is not the child whose precocity of talent appears

(*) Of the writer of this communication, the Editors not being there cannot pledge themselves on the occasion.

to supersede the necessity of cultivation, but he who is trained by the experienced preceptor who is most likely to become a useful and virtuous man. We think the Provincial Meeting is calculated for usefulness; but we do not give it credit for such a superabundance of excellence as to be incapable of improvement, and we wish that its actual energies may never dwindle and wither; or the wide sphere of its influence and usefulness be in the least degree contracted by the overweening praise, or undue admiration of its too warm partisans; we desire not so much to elicit its commendation from others, or descant upon its interest with ourselves, as we do to diffuse as widely as possible its concomitant advantages; to place its success on the only basis which cannot be shaken—the hearts and affections of ALL the wise and ALL the good. By this, if we do not secure its perpetuity, we shall, at least, preserve its dignity—it will be embalmed in the memory of those who shall never be forgotten.

Poetry.

A Fragment, found in a Case containing a Human Skeleton.

Behold this ruin! 'twas a skull,
Once of ethereal spirit full!
This narrow cell was life's retreat;
This space was thoughts mysterious seat.
What beauteous visions fill'd this spot,
What dreams of pleasure long forgot;
Nor love, nor joy, nor hope, nor fear,
Has left one trace or record here!

Beneath this mouldering canopy
Once shone the bright and busy eye;
But start not at the dismal void,
If social love that eye employ'd,
If with no lawless fire it gleam'd,
But through the dew of kindness beam'd;
That eye shall be for ever bright,
When stars and suns have lost their light!

Here in this silent cavern hung
The ready, swift, and tuneful tongue
If falsehood's honey it disdain'd,
And where it could not praise was chain'd;
If bold in virtue's cause it spoke,
Yet gentle concord never broke;
That tuneful tongue shall plead for thee
When death unveils eternity.

Say, did these fingers delve the mine,
Or with its envied rubies shine?
To hew the rock, or wear the gem,
Can nothing now avail to them;
But if the page of truth they sought,
Or comfort to the mourner brought,
These hands a richer meed shall claim
Than all that waits on wealth or fame!

Avails it whether bare or shod
 These feet the path of duty trod?
 If from the bow'rs of joy they fled,
 To sooth affliction's humble bed;
 If grandeur's guiltily bribe they spurn'd,
 At home to virtue's lap return'd,
 These feet with angel's wings shall vie,
 And tread the palace of the sky!

(ORIGINAL.)

The following lines, adapted to the air "Sound the loud Timbrel," in Moore's Sacred Melodies, if worthy of insertion in the Reflector, are quite at your service. W. G.

And the women answered one to another as they played and said, Saul has slain his thousands and David his ten thousands.—1 Samuel, xviii. 6-7.

Weep now ye daughters of Judah no more,
 The haughty Goliath's dread triumphs are o'er;
 A hero hath ris'n upholding our glory,
 O'erwhelming Philistia's terrible band.
 No more shall their champion now boast before ye,
 No more shall ye fear from his death dealing hand.
 Weep, weep then no more but high raise the strain,
 'Never, oh! never shall they conquer again.'

Glory to David, who routing our foes,
 Hath freed us from chains and captivity's woes;
 Long, long may he live the grace of our nation,
 The envy and dread of all empires around;
 For David our glory, our strength and salvation,
 The power of Philistia hath dash'd to the ground.
 The haughty Goliath's dread triumphs are o'er;
 Weep, then ye daughters of Judah no more.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We are sorry to postpone Q's. communication; we had no choice but to do that or divide the piece; and we judge, that Q. will be best satisfied with the plan we have adopted.

We are obliged to our friends who have communicated to us stories about DEVILS and PRIESTS; but they are too terrible for a Christian Reflector; we wish such frightful pictures of superstition would shame people out of the belief of such ridiculous nonsense as faith in the priests' devil, and get them to renounce their confidence in the whole fraternity. We wish to see the destruction of every religious hierarchy, for when the power of the priesthood shall be annihilated, we shall hear nothing more of their friend *Diabolos*.

We shall be glad to receive D's promised communication.

We will bring up our arrears with our correspondents as soon as we are able.

The Christian Reflector,

AND THEOLOGICAL INQUIRER.

"I speak as unto wise men; judge ye what I say." PAUL.

No. 61. LIVERPOOL, SEPTEMBER 1st, 1824. Price 4½d.

BIBLICAL CRITICISM.

LOT'S WIFE TURNED INTO A PILLAR OF SALT.

GENESIS xix. 26.—Much mischief has been done by commentators, in adhering so closely as they have to the literal sense of scripture, especially when the literal sense of the words renders the meaning not only obscure but ridiculous.

Of the destruction of the cities of the plain, no doubt can possibly exist. The once fertile plains of Jordan were like the garden of God, but are now barren in the extreme.

That the destruction of these cities was occasioned by a storm of thunder and lightning is more than probable. This was the opinion of Diodorus Sicculus and of Tacitus. It is also probable that at the time the fire descended from heaven, an earthquake happened, by which the city was ingulphed, as no vestiges of these ruins have been discovered by travellers.

The common opinion respecting Lot's wife, is exceedingly ridiculous. We recommend to our readers the following remarks of Mr. Bellamy on this subject.

Nevertheless, though these cities were destroyed, and the people for their wickedness, there is no ground either in scripture or reason, for believing that the wife of Lot was turned into a pillar of salt. Had she been turned into salt, it would have required a perpetual miracle to have preserved this monument; for salt, whether alkaline, neutral, or acid, is soluble by water, and therefore it could not long have remained in the form of a pillar, to convince posterity, as many weak people have supposed, that she was thus punished for her disobedience.

Commentators of this description have done more injury to the religion of the bible than all the atheists and deists in the world, though they have interlarded their comments on this subject with the monkish interpolation of Josephus, who is made to say, *that pillar of salt was in existence in his day*, Antiq. c. xi. sec. 4. I say monkish interpolation, for the reader will recollect, that at this early period of the christian church, all MSS. having relation to the scriptures were carried down by the mighty flood of bigotry and superstition; additions, alterations, and explanations, were foisted into the translations, to suit the craft and policy of designing men. Certainly a moment's consideration will convince any man, that a pillar of any species of salt could not have continued visible nearly 2000 years, from Abraham to Josephus. No travellers, however, since the christian dispensation, have ever met with this pillar.

Agreeably to scripture, I mean to the true and obvious sense of the original Hebrew, there is no authority for supposing that the sacred writer entertained such an opinion; neither did the patriarchs from Abraham to his time, who resided in that part of the country, and who, no doubt, would have told us of it, had any thing of this nature taken place.

The word מֶלַח *melech*, which signifies *salt*, is also, on account of its being alone indestructible in its nature, used in the scriptures as an emblem of immortality and perpetual desolation: see Numb. xviii. 19; *a covenant of salt for ever*, i. e. *a statute for ever*, 2 Chron. xiii. 5. And as a symbol of perpetual desolation, Jud. ix. 45, *beat down the city and sowed it with salt*; Ezek. xlvi. 11, *they shall be given to salt*. Not that the covenant was salt, or the land should become salt, or that sowing salt in the city should make it desolate; but it is used as a figure, comprehending a representation of something eternal like itself. For the nature of salt is wonderful; it is not in the power of fire to destroy it; even the action of fermentation, which changes every other substance in nature, has no effect on salt, it remains the same after it has passed through the body: therefore properly used as a figure of whatever approaches to its final and eternal state. This is evidently the sense in which

the word *melech* is used by the sacred writer in this passage, as it is in the above, and in every other part of the bible where this word occurs, and the final state of any thing is mentioned metaphorically. For it must be allowed, that whenever a metaphor is used, and the thing to which it is applied cannot remain, be, or exist in a natural or visible state, as is shewn above, in salts exposed to the elements, which necessarily are soon dissolved; then the word is applicable to an use which in its original import it cannot be put.

This word מלח *melech*, primarily means to *dissolve*, to *melt*, Isa. li. 6. The heavens נמלחו *nimlaachou*, shall be dissolved. Symmachus renders it αλισσιν, shall melt like salt; the Vulgate *liquefcent*, shall melt, so as not to be seen. This is one of the properties of salts, all which dissolve in water so as not to be seen in it. I therefore render the word *melech* agreeably to its primary signification, meaning the final end of the thing spoken of, by the word *destruction*.

The word נציב *netsib*, is rendered a *pillar*. But it is not here applied to mean a pillar; it signifies to establish finally; and so it is used to mean the establishing of a kingdom, 1 Chron. xviii. 3; Isa. vi. 13; to the word or promise of God, as being *established*, *fixed*, *settled*, to stand by way of a memorial, Psa. xxxix. 5. Thus it was recorded as a memorial, that the wife of Lot chose to abide with the unbelievers, of the posterity of Lot, among the idolators, rather than quit it to reside with the worshipers of God.

See Bellamy's Translation, &c. in loc.

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY DEFENDED, AND PRIEST-CRAFT EXPLODED.

(Continued from page 179.)

Sect. 8. The cry of Heresy, Schism and Blasphemy. Salvation made to depend on certain opinions.—The artifice of alarming the feelings.—Excommunication for opinions.

THE outcry of priests against the friends of free inquiry, and steady consistent adherents of christian truth, is a mis-

application and abuse of language, as well as a violation of christian principles and an outrage offered to reason and conscience.

1. When the friends of priestcraft cannot answer the arguments of those whom they wish to put down, nor disprove their doctrine ; like the shrine makers at Ephesus, they spread an alarm, and raise an outcry against them, as dangerous persons, and against their doctrine as pernicious and damnable. The cry of heresy, schism, and blasphemy, has long been the war-whoop of priests, intended to call out the ignorant, the interested, and the bigotted, the bull-dogs of reputed orthodoxy, to worry and destroy those who resist their usurpations and submit not to their tyranny, who dare to think for themselves and follow their own judgment. All opinions which are contrary to their views, or opposed to their interest and pretensions, they pronounce false and dangerous, and declare those who maintain them unworthy of christian privileges, (if they do not even deny them the name of christians) and hardly fit for society. By thus operating on the feelings, and exciting the fears of the multitude, they have kept them in bondage, and secured their own domination.

It has been observed by good writers, that the word heresy, in its primitive acceptation, was harmless ; “ as it only signified election or choice, and is used for an opinion, which a man chooseth as best or most probable. Heresy and heretic, are often used by ancient writers, as words of indifferent meaning, and the several ways of philosophizing were called sects or heresies :” yet formerly, among christians, *heretic* was the most odious name with which a man could be branded ; and heresy deemed the greatest of crimes ; consequently those deemed heretics were thought worthy of the most cruel punishment. Even in the present more liberal age, there are religious denominations whom the cry of heresy terrifies, among whom it lights the torch of discord, and excites animosity and hatred. The equivalent and indiscriminate application of the words heretic and heresy proves that there must have been some abuse, or at least misapplication of those terms. What

party is there among christians which has not, at one time or other, by some other party, been charged with heresy? The various sects and denominations have been heretical in each others eyes. The same doctrines have been deemed heretical in one age and orthodox in another. What has been thought so heretical as to deserve the severest punishment in one country, has been thought worthy of honors and emoluments in another. What is there in words which have been so variously and loosely, though fatally applied, which ought to frighten any person of virtuous and independant mind? Surely it is high time for christians to leave off using words of such indifferent meaning, as terms of reproach, to stifle inquiry, and create animosity and discord, among those who should love as brethren. As the words have been generally applied, whatever misconceptions may have been associated with them, a heresy is an opinion not generally received; and a heretic one who, in judging for himself, and acting according to the dictates of his conscience, differs from others, in particular from the party in power. But in this there is nothing contrary to integrity and virtue; indeed so to judge and act is what christianity requires of every one. Paul was a heretic in the eyes of the Jews, and confessed that after the way which they called heresy, so worshiped he the God of his fathers. Acts xxiv. 14.

In the writings of the apostles, the word heresy is sometimes used in a bad sense; but when so used it is never applied to mere matters of opinion, nor to those errors which may consist with integrity. The heresies mentioned, 1. Cor. xi. 19. consisted not in erroneous sentiments merely; but in the unchristian conduct of those who, influenced by a sectarian spirit, divided the church into parties, broke the unity of the spirit and dissolved the bonds of peace. When persons turn their own opinions into articles of faith, insist on unscriptural terms of communion, or invade the liberties of others, they are the authors of the heresies and schisms which ensue; not those who oppose their usurpations, and separate from them, that they may act the part of consistent disciples of Christ. Gal. v. 20. heresies are reckoned among immoral practices; which shows

that the apostle applied the term, not to involuntary errors, but to what was of an immoral nature: and indeed there can be no heresy worse than holding the truth in unrighteousness, nor any heresies worse than immoral professors of the gospel; but priests have branded as heretics the most virtuous of men. Those whom Peter describes as bringing in damnable heresies, are evidently vicious characters, who deny the Lord by their abominable practices (2. Pet. 2. chap.) not pious men who differ from the majority in their opinions. The heretic whom Paul would have rejected, is not an upright man who is in error, but one who is so far subverted as to allow himself in known sin, and is self-condemned; for no man can be self-condemned but he who does what he knows to be wrong. Tit. iii. 11. Those are the most like Paul's heretic who from worldly motives act contrary to their consciences in religious matters; but what he says is quite inapplicable to a sincere and virtuous man, who judges for himself, and acts with integrity, whatever may be his mistakes. If a real heretic be one who, to attain some sinister end, foment divisions among christians, aims at setting himself over his brethren, at becoming the head of a party, and who to effect his purpose, acts contrary to what he knows to be right, there can be no difficulty in judging who are not, and who are real heretics: and there will be no little difficulty, in the pretended christian priesthood freeing themselves from the charge of heresy.

The word schism is more commonly applied to what relates to discipline and practice, as heresy is to doctrine and opinion. Literally a schism is a rent, a division; and christians should study to preserve unity and peace. But if schisms and divisions take place, they are chargeable on those who occasion them by their unscriptural proceedings contrary to the rights of conscience and the liberty wherewith Christ hath made all his disciples free. There can be no crime in separating from any church, when those who separate can find no other way of acting strictly according to their consciences, and of enjoying all their liberties and privileges.

The word blasphemy has been improperly applied to religi-

ous opinions, when they have been contrary to those generally received, and at times held to be orthodox : like the words heresy and schism, it has been used as a bugbear, to frighten the people out of the use of their reason in religion, and into an acquiescence in the dogmas of their pretended spiritual guides. Those who have to maintain unpopular doctrines, because they believed them to be reasonable and scriptural, and from a regard to the honor of God and his Christ, have been charged with blasphemy, though their unimpeachable integrity and evident piety ought to have shielded them from the suspicion of such a crime : and this charge has been brought against them by men who have ascribed to God what would stamp everlasting infamy on a mortal creature ! and brought against them too for teaching what is opposed to such dishonorable notions of the Almighty and of his government ! But need we wonder at this, when we recollect that Jesus Christ himself was charged with blasphemy by the Jewish priests, and condemned to an infamous death for the falsely alleged crime. It is certain, whatsoever human laws may have determined to the contrary, that opinions which can be supported by reason and scripture and which are maintained from a regard to God and his glory, never can be blasphemous. The cry of blasphemy, any more than that of heresy, ought to deter no man from the examination of every religious subject, or from the fearless profession of what he believes to be true. When the cry of blasphemy is made, those who make it should be required to support it by such evidence as will stand at the bar of reason and scripture ; and if they fail of doing this they should be ranked with base calumniators.

All the Protestant and Reformed churches have been charged with heresy, schism and blasphemy, by the church of Rome, on account of their separation from that church, their refusing to submit to the priesthood established in it, and their rejection of some of its doctrines and ceremonies ; the Protestants and Reformists have repelled the charge by alleging that they separated from the church of Rome on account of its corruptions, that the authority they refused to submit to was usurped and tyrannical,

and that what they rejected were its errors. The Protestant and Reformed churches in turn brought similar charges against those who dissented and separated from them, and refused to bow to their authority; and the Dissenters justified their separation, and repelled the charges of the Conformists, by arguments similar to those used by the latter, in their contest with the Romanists. Again many of those who claim to be orthodox Dissenters have charged those who reject their dogmas, and refuse submission to them, with heresy and blasphemy; and on no better authority, than the Romanists charge these crimes on all who depart from her, and the established Protestant churches on all who dissent from them. The arguments used by the accused in the former cases, may be used with, at least, equal force by the accused in the latter case. All the parties who have brought such charges against their brethren, on account of their judging for themselves, and following the dictates of their own consciences, give proof of an unchristian spirit, and of the existence of priestcraft among them.

2. To render the clamor they raise about heresy and blasphemy the more effectual, and excite the greater alarm, and dread of what they are pleased to call new doctrines, in the minds of the people, their pretended spiritual guides labor to persuade them that their eternal salvation depends on a right belief: taking for granted that their own dogmas are the true evangelical doctrine, they insist that none can be saved but those who believe them and continue in that belief; that those who reject them expose themselves to eternal damnation. Though they do not say there is no salvation out of their church, many of them do say that none can be saved who reject their creed. The confident tone and overbearing manner in which they assert their own opinions, and denounce those of their opponents as destructive errors, lead those who are in the habit of looking up to them as ambassadors of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God, to think that to doubt the doctrines which they teach must be at the risk of their salvation. It is natural for such persons to be alarmed at the mere sound of doctrines, with which they constantly hear, in such an assuming tone, everlast-

ing condemnation associated as the consequence of receiving them. But it is to be remembered that they have no right to take for granted that the notions for which they contend are true evangelical doctrines; for this is the very thing in question, and it is what their opponents deny; they deny it because those pretended evangelical doctrines were not taught by Jesus and his apostles, and cannot be expressed in the words of scripture; but are merely inferred from figurative and detached texts which will bear a very different construction: and because they cannot be reconciled with what the scriptures clearly and undeniably teach; and it is very presumptuous for them to take for granted what none of the sacred writers have asserted, and to content themselves with dogmatizing when they ought to produce scriptural proofs. If what they take for granted were true, the conclusion they make from it is totally unfounded. It is unauthorized and false to say that eternal salvation depends on a right belief. Though christian truth is of the highest importance on account of its practical influence and effects, and all possible means ought to be used to attain a correct knowledge of it; yet neither Jesus nor his Apostles, have made that knowledge absolutely essential to eternal salvation. Both he and they most plainly and positively taught, that men will hereafter be judged by their works, and receive, not according to their belief, or their disbelief, but according to the things done in the body. What they believe or disbelieve will have no influence on their condition in a future life, only so far as it has had a practical influence upon them in the present life. The salvation which is by faith is a present salvation. Christ is the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him, whatever may be their opinions; nor is he said to be such to any but those who obey him. Instead of being overawed, and alarmed into a prostration of their understandings, by the dogmas and denunciations of assuming men, christians should determine to use their understandings, and to stand fast in the liberty of the gospel.

3. Those teachers whose object is the promotion of the cause of truth and righteousness, the enlightening and saving of man-

kind; cannot degrade themselves by exciting prejudice, alarming the feelings of the uninformed, weak and timid, and by stooping to those mean arts which might prevent the strictest scrutiny of all the doctrines they teach and of every thing they assert; for this would be to counteract the great objects they have in view. For any man to avail himself of the prejudices of those he addresses to prevent free and impartial examination, to alarm their feelings in order to prevent their candidly hearing both sides on every subject; to overawe their minds by positive assertions and bold and confident denunciations, is unmanly and disingenuous, utterly unworthy a minister of Jesus Christ, and shows that he has something else in view more than the promotion of pure evangelical truth. Yet these are the mean and contemptible arts to which the advocates of priestcraft continually resort. They show, by their conduct that they dread a free and impartial examination of all religious doctrines; that they tremble at the thought of what might be the consequence of those whose souls they keep in subjection hearing impartially both sides: hence they persuade them that it is dangerous to read books in which their favorite opinions are examined, and the fallacy of them exposed, or in which the doctrines they so frequently denounce as false are stated and explained, and the proof of them brought into view. They declaim against hearing preachers of an opposite party to themselves, and persuade the people that it would be giving countenance to error, running the risk of being misled, and that it might in the event endanger their salvation: that even to converse with those who deny what they call the truth, might unsettle their minds, and entangle them with carnal reasoning. Such are the unworthy arts by which many are kept from inquiring after truth. But can the real ministers of Jesus Christ employ such vile artifices in his cause? Do they not evidently belong to priestcraft? Do they not indicate a latent conviction in those who use them, that what they assert to be the doctrines of the gospel are not really such? How else are we to account for their unmanly fears of their being brought into fair competition with what they call the opposite errors? Truth

and its advocates are more fearless, it shrinks not from scrutiny, nor need they ever fear the competition between truth and error, if it be fair and open.

4. To keep the people over whom they rule, whom they have brought to prostrate their understandings, to receive implicitly their dogmas, and to be guided in their spiritual concerns by their influence and direction, from breaking off the yoke of bondage, these spiritual masters, hold over them the terrors of excommunication. If any member of their churches dare to think for himself, and to avow any proscribed opinion, he soon finds himself put in little ease, and if he cannot bring himself to retract his supposed error, he must expect to be cut off from the society : and though this is not now attended with all the painful consequences it was formerly ; still the excommunicant will, frequently, be subjected to many mortifying circumstances and inconveniences besides being deprived of religious privileges where he was wont to enjoy them ; he will probably be calumniated, his social and friendly connexions will be broken in upon, and many of the civilities and charities of life withdrawn from him where he had before received them. This power of excommunicating for opinions is usurped, being totally unauthorized by the New Testament, and incompatible with the liberty and brotherhood of christians. The remarks in this section are not made as all of them applying to any one denomination of christians as such ; it is hoped there are many teachers of every denomination to whom they are inapplicable ; still it is feared there are many to whom they are applicable, and for such they are intended. R. WRIGHT.

(To be continued.)

To the Editors of the Christian Reflector.

GENTLEMEN,

As the communications of correspondents, are not necessarily supposed to be strictly in unison with the sentiments of the conductors of the publication to which they are addressed, I rely upon that impartiality and independence which you profess, for the insertion of the following remarks, if in other respects they are not opposed to those principles upon which your useful work is conducted.

I conceive no apology to be necessary for that lack of charity which I have no doubt, some hyper-critic or other will affect to discover. I am not aware that I have been unnecessarily severe in my strictures, or can be justly charged with illiberality or harshness. At any rate, I intend no personal allusions, nor am I conscious of dealing in individual censure. But I detest a temporizing, vacillating, or indeterminate line of action; unambiguous, plain language, saves immense trouble, and destroys the possibility of being misunderstood. "That tameness and insipidity" says the intrepid Gilbert Wakefield, "which can discuss the most momentous subjects, without warmth, and without emotion; which we know too often conceal the ferocity of the *wolf* under a *lamb-like* voice—are by no means congenial with my temper. I hate no man, I despise no man, I envy no man, I fear no man. Let others speak and act in this manner, and the world will know whom it can trust."

Acting upon this principle, I have expressed my opinions, with that plainness, which the importance of the subject, I conceive demands: if I am mistaken, the antidote accompanies the poison; if in some respects supported by facts, reformation, where wanted, may result.

Without further preface, I proceed to offer a few remarks upon a paragraph, which appeared in the Reflector (No. 57, p. 109) which is as follows. "To this arrangement (that of balancing the influence and talent of the pastors, by giving the unlearned and in general acquiescent "people" double the number of votes) I am confident the ministers of our connection, (as indeed the ministers of any connection) would strongly object, and if it were adopted would very naturally decline co-operation, from its throwing the preponderance of power, into the hands of the people, and subjecting themselves to a potent opposition, and an inimical combination. Let the power be fairly poised, and I flatter myself a plan, so congenial to their best wishes, and so helpful to their arduous labors, would meet with their cordial concurrence and patronage." The writer signs himself MODERATOR, who he may be, is a matter of little moment, but it is worthy of remark that the plural form of expression used in a subsequent part of his communication renders it probable that he is the organ of some party who possesses an intense interest on the subject.*

Although I may by some be probably considered, as being unfortunately possessed of a certain opacity of intellect, I must confess that I see no grounds for the jealousy displayed concerning the exercise of a little brief authority. There seems to be no danger of the Unitarians shaking off at once that su-

* The passage I allude to is this. "Restrictor will pardon us, for watching with an anxious eye, &c. &c." One conclusion must I think be very obvious to the reader.

pineness for which they are celebrated, and simultaneously acting on the plan proposed by Restrictor ;—for that plan does not possess the authority of some well known name to grace and sanction it ; nor does it produce the credentials necessary to entitle it to a warm reception and decisive support. Nor are those persons altogether imaginary, who cannot perceive the beneficial tendency of any proposed plan until it has been patronized by the respectable and wealthy ; whose co-operation cannot be obtained for a scheme, which originates with one, who being their junior in years, they logically conclude to be inferior in wisdom ; and who scruple not to affix the supercilious appellation of boy to any luckless individual, who possessing not a hoary head, but in its stead, a heart beating with the zeal and enterprize of early life, endeavor to infuse a portion of his energy into the torpidity of age. The ruling principle of such persons, seems to be accurately delineated, in that inquiry of prejudice, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?”—and allowing full scope to a mean and despicable jealousy, they may refer to that exact representation of their situation,—the religious animosity, and uncharitable feelings, which existed between the Jews and the Samaritans, as strictly analogous to themselves.

The tenderness with which “Moderator” treats, of what I think he might have consistently styled the “imprescriptible rights” of the “ministers of our connection” is certainly amusing. But after all, who, and what are the ministers ? Do their advocates arrogate for them an indescribable sacredness of character ? that they are in possession of spiritual gifts which render them superior to ordinary humanity ? that they are to be approached with awe and reverence, as something more than mortal men ? that they expect a marked and unceasing attention from others in their intercourse with the world ?* that they are acquainted

* If in consequence of the sentiment which met with such “unanimous approbation” at the second anniversary of the Moor Lane, (Bolton) congregation, the “Unitarian ministers of Lancashire and Cheshire” find those weighty objections removed which prevented their attendance ; and as it appears, that from some unknown cause, or causes, they could not accept the general invitation which was addressed without distinction to all “friends of free inquiry,” (perhaps because they did not conceive themselves included in that appellation) but require a *special* invitation, it may be reasonably concluded that some *special* accommodation, be likewise necessary, at the next anniversary. Taking a hint from the last, I would therefore suggest, that instead of the raised platform, whose appearance filled the disciples of christian equality with wonder and amazement, a sufficient length of a certain end of the table be constructed in a similar manner, and for the same purpose as the Saxon *Dais*, at which the reverend gentlemen may regale themselves, uncontaminated by being placed upon a level with the vulgar, illiterate herd ; and, as lordly patrons of a popular meeting, grace the *uppermost seats* with that dignity of demeanor and unbending majesty, so becoming and appropriate to the followers of the lowly Nazarene.

with the counsels of the Most High,—and being exclusively enabled to read and interpret aright the glad tidings of the Gospel ; to impugn therefore their opinions, would involve the most tremendous consequences ? Let the respected Richard Wright be referred to for reply. Ministers and pastors, are men, and nothing more : they are moreover placed in rather a critical situation, and ever liable to public attention, for mankind have not forgotten the deeds of Priestcraft, nor how prone man is, to bend religion itself to the purposes of self aggrandizement, and by means of that fell demon superstition, to exercise an arbitrary sway over the mind. Priestcraft is not yet banished from the earth, though not perhaps, as in ages that are gone, seated in the pontifical chair decorated with gorgeous and splendored robes, and ruling the kingdoms with a rod of iron ; nor to be found presiding at synods and councils, impiously adding human devices to the revelation of omniscience, and stamping the foul deed, by authorizing persecution, to slay and massacre for the glory of God. She may not be as Calvin's tutelary genius witnessing with exultation the martyrdom of Servetus ; nor administering at the fires of Smithfield, nor gliding through the dungeon's gloom, seeking the captive for conscience sake, to plunge him into misery and despair. She may be found among the flaming sons of established hierarchies, and she is also to be found in dissenting communities ; dogmatizing at conferences, domineering at provincials, displaying at college examinations, and dictating with presumptuous infallibility from dissenting pulpits.

Ministers are but men : if men of virtue and talent, they will merit respect, and with it proportionate influence and "*power*," and they will ever obtain it from the wise and good in exact proportion to their moral excellence, but never will they possess it, merely because they assume a name, or fill an office. A right honorable may be a knave, a right reverend may be a dunce, and a minister may be any thing but respectable. The name possesses no occult quality, no talismanic charm, which can rob people of their understandings, and cause them to give honor, to whom honor is not due. They are rapidly discarding those sentiments which once prevailed, and it every day becomes more apparent, that the man of worth, is publicly respected, while the grovelling character is generally despised, who plumes himself upon a fancied superiority as minister, merely from the situation he has presumed to fill without being able to sustain its duties ; or if possessed of talents, they debased and alloyed by an overweening insufferable vanity.

But surely it is a libel upon that respectable body, the "ministers of our connection" that they would decline co-operation in an arrangement for an association, which provided two counter votes, for the minister's one, "from its throwing its

preponderance of power into the hands of the people, and subjecting themselves to a potent opposition and an inimical combination." Power! what an ungracious term. Verily, the cloven foot. Power! what power can they consistently require who profess themselves disciples of him who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister? Whose imperative duty it therefore is to serve and to minister to their brethren.* Power! we know that the priests of superstition have exercised power from the earliest period of their existence down to the present hour; but we also know that the disciples of Christ have nothing to do with power. "Be not ye" says our lawgiver, "called Rabbi; for one is your master even Christ, and all ye are brethren." "Neither be ye called masters, for one is your master even Christ."

That confliction of interests, which Moderator so much deprecates, could not possibly exist, if a truly christian spirit were generally practised. But this spirit appears to be wanting, for Moderator, who writes as if he were aware of the existence of certain secret feelings, asserts, that a "preponderance of power in the hands of the people," would subject the ministers "to a potent opposition and an inimical combination." I suppose he will allow, that the people would not act in the manner which he imputes to them without sufficient cause. If this be the case, I conclude that the ministers are conscious of something unpalatable in their proceedings; they find themselves in the anomalous situation of a body, possessing separate feelings and separate interests from those with whom they ought to be indissolubly united; possessing one heart and one soul; insomuch that the moment they come in contact, a "potent opposition and inimical combination" must unavoidably take place. Thus, if Moderator means any thing, he either implies that the ministers have become priests, and know that their conduct is unpopular; or he casts a false and calumnious charge upon the people, by attributing to them an inclination to opposition, without even the slightest grounds of resistance. But again. "Let the power be fairly poised," and we shall then obtain the "cordial concurrence and patronage" of ministers. I think it is evident from ecclesiastical history, that spiritual and ghostly fathers never preceded their brethren of the human race in works of melioration and improvement. They have ever been zealous partizans of things as they are; decided enemies of innovation; (the term is always applied to suggested alterations in old established customs and observances) strenuous opposers of religious reformation; and of attempted alterations in ecclesiastical discipline. They have tramelled the exertions of the philanthropist, destroyed or neutralized the labors of the patriot, and have raised the fiends

* Matt. xx. 25. and following verses.

of bigotry and superstition to stay the course, and effect the ruin of the religious reformer. Their concurrence therefore is a blessing which comes in the most suspicious guise, and ought not to be received with unbounded gratitude. But their patronage! good heaven! The patronage of priests, I am speaking of temporals, though in some instances I might extend the limits, is generally tantamount to a badge of infamy, and ecclesiastical patronage is seldom if ever beneficial. May heaven forefend any plan which appears likely to effect good, from being protected and patronized by a haughty priesthood, for if such be unfortunately the case, the friend of the human race, may look for the blessings he anticipated, but he will assuredly look in vain.

It is the duty of every consistent Unitarian to protest against all and every species of clerical patronage; it is evidently inconsistent and absurd.* Let this patronage be once introduced, and an establishment with all its concomitant evils, its corrupt practices, and priestly pride, and sacerdotal domination, will certainly succeed. It is contrary too to the simplicity of the gospel, irreconcilable with all the customs of the primitive church, and is opposed to the reiterated injunctions of the Lord and Master of christians. It is foreign to the station and to the duties of a christian teacher, and however unblushingly claimed, invests him with nothing more than a fictitious kind of precedence, which he cannot with dignity or propriety assume.

As I am convinced of the absolute necessity, that such opinions as those which Moderator has publicly advanced, ought to be as publicly contravened, I have (in the absence of more able communications) endeavored to expose their fallacy, and

* Let me refer to an instance in point as illustrative of its pernicious consequences, and a Unitarian *cum* Presbyterian one too; the celebrated Provincial Meeting, which being decidedly and avowedly a meeting of ministers (lay friends being admitted by courtesy) is founded upon an aristocratic basis, which in some instances amounts to the exclusion of what are termed the "lower orders:" low indeed as respects pecuniary means, but often able to contest the palm of superiority on the score of sincere humility, piety, zeal, and true christian independence.

Yet hopeless as seems the expectation, that the Provincial will ever become a popular assembly, a meeting of the people; yet the disinterested attempt lately made to establish one on the comprehensive foundation of christian liberty and equality (and which I trust will be eventually matured) is characterized as an invidious endeavor to disturb the peace of the church, to form a party, to promote discord, and ultimately separation. This is another of those innumerable instances where the most praiseworthy actions are attributed to the basest of motives. But the friends of the rights of man, and the advocates of the privileges of the people (start not reader, I say privileges of the people) cannot expect to have a better character, than was given to Paul and his companions, by their countrymen at Thessalonica, "These that have turned the world upside down, are come hither also." Acts xvii. 6.

which would result, were they reduced to practice. I lay no claim to infallibility, but I flatter myself I shall be allowed the merit of an honest, explicit and unvarnished avowal of sentiment. And to avoid the charge of indiscriminate animadversion, and prevent possibility of being misunderstood I state in conclusion, that whilst penning the preceding remarks, I was perfectly conscious of the truth of the axiom,—“there is no general rule without exceptions.” Q.

The Dissenter, No. IV.

“Venerating truth above all earthly things, I can think and speak of myself, as well as of other men, without malice and without extenuation.”—*Gilbert Wakefield.*

ON THE SPIRIT OF DISSENT.

MAN is not essentially a lover of changes. A social being, he prefers acting in concert with his fellow man, to taking an isolated part. Naturally sympathetic, he delights in mingling his joys with those around him. In sharing his griefs with his friends, he feels himself relieved of more than half their burden; and is enabled to bear up against difficulties, and to surmount obstacles which would be otherwise insupportable; and which would crush him to earth. We naturally expect greater support, and more willing assistance, from those whose habits assimilate nearest to our own. They enter more readily into our plans and perceive our views sooner than others; they feel interested in their accomplishment, and join freely in the labor; and we set a higher value on their exertions, and prize their judgments more, even in matters not immediately relating to the peculiar pursuits which are common to us both. Their every movement is a subject of anxiety to us; the heart beats high at the prospect of their success, and is sunk in disappointment if they do not succeed. In the one case we feel a glow of pride, as though we had had something to do in accomplishing it; and in the other a feeling of shame is perceptible, as if disgrace awaited us, along with our unfortunate friend.

Of all pursuits in which men engage, those of an intellectual nature have the greatest effect, in producing this social feeling. The more they are founded in pure thought, the stronger are the attachments they create. The more mechanical part of our occupations do indeed tend, in some small degree, to form and cherish this social principle; but, compared with the intellectual part, its effects are poor and weak. The one is of a temporary nature, and supplies the wants of the moment only; the

other relates to something which can be enjoyed for a succession of periods ; the one presents to us an uniform monotonous aspect, the same to-day as yesterday ; the other assumes a variety of appearances, and though essentially the same, is so much varied in figure and accompaniments, as ever to present something new, on which we may gaze with interest ; the one is presented to us in connection with similar objects at all times ; while the other brings new associations, which improve its original beauty, and which keep the mind ever active in the contemplation of it ; the one relates only to things in possession ; whilst the other delights in the bright visions of hope, connecting with the present the past and future, looking on the days that are gone by, and painting in delightful colors, those which are yet to come ; the one is confined to a spot, a mere point, narrow and contracted ; while the other takes the universe in its compass, is not confined to this or to that place, but ranges through the globe, flits from planet to planet, and from system to system ; the one is often the manifest effect of necessity ; whilst the other is the object of choice ; the one is accompanied with toil, is irksome and disagreeable ; the other is ever attended with pleasure, in its pursuit we experience the most delightful sensations, in its enjoyments the purest gratification. In associating with those who think as we think, we communicate our whole minds ; the reciprocal interchange of thought, presents new objects of thought, new ideas spring up for our contemplation, new sources of gratification are opened, and our souls mingle as it were with those of each other ; the strongest affections are created, our individual welfare is connected with that of all around us, and self love and social become the same.

Religion is that sort of pursuit, which, while it combines in itself all those powers to render man social, which are the common results of all other intellectual pursuits, adds to them universality in the number of its objects, and importance in their value. While circumstances may render the study of any science the employment of a few only, the study and practice of religion is, or may be, that of the whole mass. Embracing in its wide compass men of all conditions, it offers peculiar advantages to none. All may alike understand and perform its requirements. Coming home to the business and consciences of all men, its duties are alike imperative upon all ; nor does it present any thing for the understanding which may not be grasped by the meanest capacity, as well as the most exalted genius. Its elements are few and simple ; requiring no deep thought, no profound research, nor critical acumen. The objects it presents, are alike interesting to all, for all have the same origin, and the same destination. Other studies are confined to the creation, but this contemplates the creator in

connection with the creation. They are confined to this life, but it connects with this life that which is to come. Science undoubtedly contributes to the happiness of mankind generally, and to that of her students particularly. It adds to the pleasures of life, and dignifies and adorns the human character. It elevates the thoughts and raises the mind to the contemplation of the grandeur of the creation and the greatness of the creator. We contemplate his power and wisdom in his works, and learn to admire him. But it is religion that secures to us the enjoyment of his most endearing attribute, his goodness. By presenting the Deity to our minds, in the endearing character of creator, governor and friend, it calls upon us to love as well as to admire him. By requiring us to live virtuous and holy lives, such as will bear reflection in the days that are to come, He points out to us the path that will secure to us the greatest sum of happiness here, and by the promise of future reward to the good, affords the most extensive ground for hope, and the greatest encouragement to perseverance. By pointing out the miseries attendant upon vice, the punishments that await the doers of injustice, and the remorse, shame, grief, and suffering, which are the inevitable consequences of crime, it restrains the irregularity of passions, and checks the force of temptation.

Thus presenting on the one hand, the most interesting and important objects for which human industry can exert itself; and on the other, the greatest and most fearful evils that human prudence can wish to avoid; it calls forth the finest feelings of sympathy, the tenderest regard for each others welfare, and the most sincere desire for each others prosperity. It unites men in the closest bonds of friendship by furnishing them with the most exalted subjects, in which to communicate with each other. Each feels anxious that the sentiments and wishes of those around him should coincide with his own. None are anxious to disturb the established order of things in a community where all his dearest connections centre, as every deviation will be looked on with suspicion, and produce something disagreeable to himself. Doubts are therefore often suppressed, and thoughts which might lead ultimately to an inquiry fatal to a belief in what is taught and believed as true, are discouraged.

The difficulty with which a people can be brought to change their religious opinions, must, under any circumstances, be therefore very great; and peculiarly so when the reformation is from such a system as the church of Rome was. As a christian church, it claimed a divine origin. Teaching, that it was founded on a revelation made by God himself, to his creature man, it inspired its votaries with the greatest confidence; and claiming for itself, the exclusive privilege of

interpreting and expounding that revealed will, vested in a succession of priests, or ministers, it required implicit submission to their fiat. The decrees of their councils were ushered into the world as the express commands of God, made through them, no appeal was allowed to reason or to scripture. Eternal torments were denounced against any who might doubt, of dispute the truth of their representations. The confidence thus inspired on the one hand, and the fear created on the other, yielded to the priests, absolute dominion over the human mind. Men dared not to think; all incentives to thought were destroyed, and all was resigned to the guidance of those interested in keeping them in abject meanness.

There is something imposing in the idea of a system having been the same for a considerable period. When we contemplate it, rising for ages of unbroken connection, and view it till it is lost in the obscurity of days that are long since fled; when we contemplate its having been the faith of so many millions that have gone before us, that it has been held by all those whose memories are dear to us, and that it has afforded pleasure and consolation to them; we feel an inward dread of calling into question the opinions of so many who have preceded us; and shrink from the thought of breaking in upon so many old associations. The claims of antiquity are easily yielded. There is a sort of respect inspired by the contemplation of the antique, which casts a shade of sacred awe around, from whence there appears to issue a voice, commanding our submission, and forbidding us to scrutinize: the church of Rome was not insensible to this, and it was therefore urged as one of her claims to universal dominion.

Nor, was the influence of numbers without effect in fixing the attachment of the people to her worship. To form a part of so large a flock, acknowledging the same shepherd; to kneel at the same shrine, with millions of men of various countries; to be members of the same communion, with the high and the low, the rich and the powerful of all the known world, inspired a degree of pride and confidence, in the bosom of the slave and the peasant. Numbers, always impose on the mind, and make it rest in conscious satisfaction of its correctness.

The ceremonies with which her worship is celebrated are of those kinds, which, by captivating the senses, fill the mind with awe and reverence. The sacerdotal character of the priests, in splendid robes, performing the service in an unknown tongue, and assuming the power of changing the bread and the wine into the "real body and blood of God," claiming the power to forgive sins on confession being made to them. The burning of tapers during worship, the burning of incense, the tinkling of bells, and the devout manner of priests during the consecration of the host make it a truly imposing ceremony. The

invocation of saints inspiring a belief in the immediate connection between the votary and his patron, the respect taught to be paid to the relics of the canonized, and the miraculous powers ascribed to them; the fasts and festivals, the saints' days and holy days, with all the paraphernalia and pomp attending them; connecting the pastimes of the people with their religious duties, and consecrating every cessation from labor to the same end, all tended to attach them to the system of their forefathers. The fine arts too were drawn upon for their share of effect, painting and sculpture and music stole upon the senses with their fascinating influences. The delightful strains of the choir ascending at morning and evening worship, calling forth the finest feelings of devotion, the images or statues of the divine founder of christianity and of saints, inspiring an habitual respect for him and them, and the paintings, representing the most interesting objects connected with the origin and progress of their religion, and carrying the mind back to those glorious and interesting periods which must be dear to all, and connecting these with the forms and ceremonies of the church, and with her feasts and festivals, would form one very powerful link in the chain of attachment to her.

Need we then wonder that men submitted so long to a yoke which appears to the eye of reason so degrading to the human character, so foreign to the spirit of christianity, and attended with such fatal consequences to the intellectual improvement of the world. The gradual corruptions of the pure gospel of Christ, by interweaving the superstitions of paganism, stole upon the minds of christians imperceptibly. When men could no longer withhold their assent to its truth, they endeavored to render it more palatable by adding the remains of the old systems to it. Still clinging with fondness to the religion of their forefathers, though unable to hold themselves to it, they dragged as much of it after them as they could grasp. It was handed down from sire to son, thus corrupted, receiving ever and anon fresh additions, such as the craft of the interested deemed necessary to mystify its character, to destroy its simplicity, and to make it a religion of pomp and circumstance, of imposing ceremonies and gaudy show. To make it a fit instrument for enslaving the bodies and souls of men. They accomplished their purpose. The splendor of the show dazzled the mind; it yielded to the impression and sunk. The chains by which it was enslaved were indeed gilded ones, it regarded them as children do toys, it admired their beauty, it fostered and encouraged their growth, till at length they grew too heavy to be borne. It was felt that with all their show they were a grievous burden. An effort was made, some of them were broken in sunder, others were weakened, and an emancipation commenced, which will ultimately make the human mind what it ought to be, **FREE.**

CLEANTHES.

THOUGHTS ON EXTRAVAGANCE IN DRESS.

“What news?—the world is mad!”—YOUNG.

To the Editors of the Christian Reflector.

GENTLEMEN,

It is at all times melancholy to contemplate on the fashion and folly which prevails to such an alarming extent amongst the higher ranks of society, but it is more particularly so at a period like the present, when every effort is making by persons of all denominations to evangelize the world, and to restore it in some degree to its pristine purity. Never did I peruse a fact with stranger emotions of sorrow and surprise, than that of a lady (the Hon. Mrs. *****) having appeared at the Caledonian Ball, lately given in London, attired in a dress which was valued at *three hundred thousand pounds!!* and the splendor of which it was stated gave the wearer the appearance of a MOVING FIRMAMENT! Who is there that does not see in this “imagination’s guilt, and fancy’s fond excess?” Who is there that does not blush to think, that in England there should be a female so degenerate, so lost to every principle of charity and christian humility? Who is there that does not say, in thinking of such unparalleled extravagance, “Might not this have been sold and given to the poor?” Whilst this devotee to fashion was revelling in wanton luxury, how many of her less fortunate fellow creatures were there that knew not what they should eat, or what they should drink, or wherewith they should be clothed! Whilst she was “tripping on the light fantastic toe” of giddy folly, who can number up the children of affliction that were drinking bitter draughts from misery’s hemlock cup, and feeling all the sad variety of pain which poverty is heir to! But how the poor endure the ills they have, the wealthy little think or seldom care: their time is so much absorbed in devising pleasures that perish in the using, and their minds so captivated with trifles light as air, that though they hear the plaintive cry of woe “they know not whence it cometh nor whither it goeth.” Did they, however, think but for a moment on the pangs the many feel, and on the end for which they themselves were born, it would make the memory with grief recoil, and stop the chariot wheels of vanity. They would see the futility of indulging in pleasures which war against the soul, and would only follow in the trains of such as are the handmaids to charity; they would learn to feel for others woes, their bosoms would heave with sighs for the oppressed, and their eyes would glisten with tears of sympathy: they would possess more of the milk of human kindness, and, like their Savior, they would “go about doing good.”

In contemplating the motives which would actuate the person who is the subject of these remarks to evince such extreme vanity, I feel at a loss to conjecture from what source they could emanate. If she were beautiful and possessed of those attractions which nature sometimes lavishes on her children, then her gaudy trappings were superfluous, "for loveliness needs not the foreign aid of ornament, but is, when unadorned, adorned the most." If she DID NOT possess external graces and accomplishments sufficient to cause the company to be enamoured with her person, then such a dress as hers did not become the wearer—she must have appeared a daw in borrowed plumes, and like her diamonds, shone but with reflected light! Again: could she expect to feel the exquisite pleasure which flows from the remembrance of well doing? I think not: where was the ear that blessed her when it heard of her, or where the eye that beamed with pure delight at her approach? Did the blessing of him that was ready to perish come upon her, or had she caused any widow's heart to sing for joy. Had she delivered any poor that cried, or the fatherless, and him that had none to help? Alas! all these things are against her. But though she could experience no delight from the reflection of having poured oil and wine into any wounded breast, yet she might, if impressed with proper feelings, discover much cause for regret in so wilful an abuse of the blessings which a kind Providence permitted her to enjoy,—for how many of her poor tenants must have toiled till the sweat burst from every pore, and many must have eaten the bread of carefulness, have risen up early and late have taken rest, to procure the splendid vesture at which all gazed but none admired? "O fie on't, fie on't, such deeds smell rank!" Well might the poet say "frailty, thy name is woman." I would that I could lead this honorable lady to the feet of the Prince of Peace, there might she learn of him who was meek and lowly of heart, and thus find rest for her soul; but should this expedient fail I would lead her to the charnel-house of her buried ancestors, there she would find the worm her only kinsman; there she might learn that "though she wade in wealth or soar in fame, earth's highest station ends in 'here he lies;' and 'dust to dust' concludes her noblest song. That these remarks may tend to check the pride of proud presumptuous woman is the earnest wish of

Yours, JUVENIS.

Chester.

To the Editors of the Christian Reflector.

GENTLEMEN,—We read Dan. chap. iii. that three men, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego would not regard the commands of the King of Babylon, to worship the God which he had set up: In consequence of their refusal they were cast into the middle of a burning fiery furnace."—Then we read,

"Nebuchadnezzar the King was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the King, true, O King. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; *and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.*" Wishing for a solution of the difficulty I feel, I shall be obliged to some of your correspondents for an explanation of the latter part of the 25th verse, "The form of the fourth is like the Son of God"—I am your well-wisher, JOE STUBBS.

Original Poetry.

Almighty God, thy pow'r we sing!
And to thy goodness tribute bring
For all thy works of love;
Thy wisdom crowns thy boundless might,
Thy kindness brings thy truth to light
As clear as orbs above.

The universe thy greatness shows,
And endless space thy presence knows
O wond'rous, glorious God!
Thy finger marks the comets sphere,
And countless orbs in full career
Pursue their various road.

Nor less the wonders of thine hand,
Which, nearer view'd, our souls command,
For grandeur shines in all;
The lightning's glare, the foaming deep,
The whirlwind's blast, the craggy steep
Our trembling frames appal.

And, wand'ring through this globe of earth,
On which unnumber'd tribes have birth
In quick successive round;
We stop to gaze, but soon are lost
On seas of pow'r creative tost,
The pow'r without a bound.

How full are earth, and sea, and air!
How great thy love! what constant care
Of all the host is shown;
On great and small thy bounty flows,
And all creation richly glows
With goodness all thine own.

T.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We shall give in our next as full a Report as we can make room for, of the proceedings of, and the speeches delivered at, the Meeting held on the 12th ult. to present the Rev. John Grundy of Manchester with a service of Plate, as a testimony of respect from the Unitarian Congregation assembling in Cross Street in that Town.
We are obliged, to postpone the letter of *Senex* on the Atonement.
Many favors are omitted for want of room.

F. B. Wright, Printer, Castle Street, Liverpool.

The Christian Reflector,

AND THEOLOGICAL INQUIRER.

"I speak as unto wise men; judge ye what I say." PAUL.

No. 62. LIVERPOOL, OCTOBER 1st, 1824. Price 4½d

BIBLICAL CRITICISM.

ISAIAH IX. 6.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, &c.

We copy the following excellent remarks on the subject of the text, from the work of RAMMOHUN ROY, the East Indian Unitarian Christian. This man has renounced the system of Hindoo Polytheism, in which he was educated, and in which he officiated as a Brahmin; and he also rejects the system of Trinitarianism advocated by modern Christians, from a firm conviction that it rests on the same foundation as Paganism; and, in its different branches, assimilates with that superstition.—EDITS.

TRINITARIAN Divines quote *John* i. 14, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth," as a reference to *Isaiah* ix. 6, though the evangelist John made no allusion to this passage of *Isaiah* in the verse in question. The passage of *Isaiah* thus referred to was applied to *Hezekiah*, the son of Ahaz, figuratively designated as the son of the virgin, the daughter of Zion, to wit, Jerusalem,* foretold by the prophet as the deliverer of the city from the hands of its enemies, though its utter destruction was then threatened

* Let no one be surprised at this interpretation of the term, nor at its application. Is it not the language of Historians and Poets? Are we not told, that seven cities contended which of them gave birth to *Homer*? Did not Italy give birth to *Virgil*? Does not England boast of having given birth to *Hampden*, *Sidney*, *Shakspeare*, *Milton*, *Locke* and *Newton*? Is not every nation represented under the figure of a woman? Are not cities generally spoken of in the feminine gender?—EDITS.

by the kings of Syria and Israel. The words "a virgin," are *the virgin*, both in the original Hebrew and in the Greek of the Gospel of *Matthew*, as well as in the Septuagint. But unless Ahaz was aware of the allusion of the Prophet, the use of the definite article in this passage must be quite inexplicable; and no one will contend for a moment, that it was given to that wicked king to understand that the mother of Christ was the virgin alluded to; what then could Ahaz have comprehended by the expression "the virgin"? On referring to 2 *Kings* xix. 21, we find the same Prophet makes use of the very expression, where he informs the king, *Hezekiah*, of the denunciation of God against *Sennacherib*, the blasphemous king of Assyria, who was at that time besieging Jerusalem. "This is the word the Lord hath spoken concerning him; *The virgin*, the daughter of Zion, hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn."—It is impossible to conceive that these words, expressly spoken of the king of Assyria, bear any allusion to the virgin, the mother of Christ; and it illustrates clearly the otherwise obscure expression of the Prophet addressed to Ahaz, when he foretold the happy reign of his successor *Hezekiah*. In *Isaiah* x. 32, "He (the king of Assyria) shall shake his hand against the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem." The epithet "The daughter of Zion," which in the last passage was used as synonymous with "the virgin," here signifies Jerusalem itself, in which sense it was commonly used in the figurative language of the Prophet and no doubt well understood by Ahaz: for we find the same words in many other passages used to signify either a city or the people of a city. *Isaiah* xxiii. 12: "And he said, Thou shalt no more rejoice, O thou oppressed *virgin*, daughter of Zion." Ch. xlvii. 1: "Come down, and sit in the dust, O *virgin* daughter of Babylon." *Jeremiah* xiv. 17: "Therefore thou shalt say this word unto them: Let mine eyes run down with tears night and day, and let them not cease; for the *virgin* daughter of my people is broken with a great breach." Ch. xviii. 13: "Therefore thus saith the Lord; Ask ye now among the heathen, who hath heard such things: the *virgin* of Israel hath done a very horrible thing." Ch. xxxi. 4:

“Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O *virgin* of Israel : thou shalt again be adorned with thy tabrets, and shalt go forth in the dances of them that make merry.” Ver. 13 : Then shall the *virgin* rejoice in the dance,” &c. Ver. 21 : “Set thee up waymarks, make thee high heaps : set thine heart toward the highway, even the way which thou wentest : turn again, O *virgin* of Israel, turn again to these thy cities.” *Lam.* i. 15 : “The Lord hath trodden the *virgin*, the daughter of Judah, as in a wine press.” Ch. ii. 13 : “What thing shall I take to witness for thee ? what thing shall I liken to thee, O daughter of Jerusalem ? what thing shall I liken to thee, O *virgin* daughter of Zion ? for thy breach is great like the sea ; who can heal thee ?” *Amos* v. 2 : “The *virgin* of Israel is fallen, she shall no more rise : she is forsaken upon her land ; there is none to raise her up.”

To shew that the passages in question, as well as all that is foretold in this and the succeeding chapters, refer to the reign of Hezekiah, nothing more than a comparison of them with the records of that reign is requisite.

[Our limits will not permit us to transcribe the passages at length, which the author has adduced, we beg therefore that our readers will very carefully peruse them in the Bible ; they are, *Isaiah* vii. 1—17 ; ch. viii. 5—8 ; ch. ix. 1—7 ; ch. x. 5—12, 16—25, 27. 2 Kings xviii. 1—8, 17 28—35 ; ch. xix. 15, 16, 19—23, 27, 28, 32—37. 2 *Chron.* xxx. 24—27 ; ch. xxxi. 20, 21 ; ch. xxxii. 23, 23.—EDITS.]

If, as is declared by Trinitarians, the child promised in ch. vii. 14, be the same that is alluded to in ch. ix. 6, and ch. x. 17, it is quite evident from the context, that he was to be the deliverer of the Jews from the hands of the King of Assyria, and was to be distinguished by the excellence of his administration and the respect in which he was to be held by all nations. Making allowance for the hyperbolical style of Eastern nations, nothing can more aptly apply as prophecy than these passages do to the reign of Hezekiah, as described in the above extracts from *Kings* and *Chronicles*. But what, it may be asked, had the birth of Christ to do with the destruction of the king of Assyria ? or how could it be said that before he “knew to

refuse the evil and choose the good," the land of Syria and of Israel should be deserted of their respective kings, Rezin and Pekah, who were gathered to their fathers many years before his birth?

This illustrious son of Ahaz was not the only king among the select nation of God, that was honoured with such names as Hezekiah or "God my strength," and "Emanuel" or "God with us;" and also with such epithets as "Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace." We find several other chiefs of that tribe that used to walk in the way of God, dignified in scripture with epithets of a similar import. *Genesis* xxxii. 28: "And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel (Prince of God); for as a Prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." *Psalms* lxxxix. 18: For the Lord is our defence; and THE HOLY ONE of Israel is our king. 19, Then thou spakest in vision to *thy Holy One*, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is *mighty*: I have exalted one chosen out of the people. 20, I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I *anointed* him: 27, Also I will make him MY FIRST BORN, higher than the kings of the *earth*."

As to the word "a virgin," found in the English translation, I request my readers to advert to the original Hebrew *תעלה* "the virgin," as well as to the Greek both of the Septuagint and the Gospel of *Matthew*, *ἡ παρθένα* "the virgin," leaving it to them to judge, whether a translation which so entirely perverts the meaning preserved throughout, by men whom we cannot suspect of ignorance of the original language, must not have proceeded from a previous determination to apply the term "virgin," as found in the Prophet, to the mother of Christ, in order that the high titles applied to Hezekiah might in the most unqualified manner be understood of Jesus.

The Evangelist Matthew referred in his Gospel to *Isaiah* vii. 14, merely for the purpose of accommodation; the Son of Ahaz and the Saviour resembling each other, in each being the means, at different periods, though in different senses, in establishing the throne of the house of David. In the same manner he re-

ferred to *Hosea* xi. 1, in ch. ii. 15, of his Gospel, and in many other instances. How inconsistent is it that a sect, which maintains the omniscience and omnipotence of Jesus, should apply to him a passage, by which he is made subject to such a degree of ignorance, as not to be able at one period to distinguish between good and evil. (*Isaiah* vii. 16: "For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good," &c.) Admitting that these quotations in *Isaiah* were originally applicable to Jesus, they cannot assist in proving the Deity of the Messiah; just as they fall short of proving the divinity of Hezekiah when applied to him: for we find in the sacred writings the name of God, and even the term Jehovah, the peculiar name of God, applied as an appellation to others, without establishing any argument for asserting the Deity of those to whom such names are given. *Jeremiah* xxxiii. 16: "In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith *she* shall be called, JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." In the English version, the word Jehovah is rendered "Lord" in this and in other passages.--*Exodus* xvii. 15: "And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi, or 'JEHOVAH MY BANNER.'" It is fortunate that some sect has not hitherto arisen, maintaining the Deity of Jerusalem, or of the altar of Moses, from the authority of the passages just mentioned.

"Precepts of Jesus, with First, Second and Final Appeal."
pp. 272—284. London, 1824.

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY DEFENDED, AND PRIEST-CRAFT EXPLODED.

(Continued from page 203.)

Sect. 9. Union of church and state, of civil and ecclesiastical power.—Establishment of the christian religion by worldly power.—State patronage of christianity.—Religion defended by penal laws.

THE union of church and state, the placing of civil and ecclesiastical power in the same hands, and making the welfare and prosperity of the state to seem to depend on that of the

church, so as to render civil government subservient to its purposes, and cover itself with the panoply of human laws, may be regarded as the master stroke of Priestcraft. Whether such an union be consistent with the nature of genuine christianity, or at all possible without the corruption of it, and great injury to both civil and religious liberty, the progress of truth, and the interests of mankind, deserves the most serious inquiry. Though Priestcraft had no doubt made considerable progress among the professors of the gospel prior to its union with the state, in the reign of the Emperor Constantine, independently of that union, which history shows to have been destructive of religious liberty, it could not have attained that absolute sovereignty, nor have made the dreadful havoc among christians, which it did afterwards. Though it exists and operates among religious denominations which are unconnected with the state, it is not possible it should become that formidable monster which it hath shown itself when armed with the power of the state, or do the extensive mischief it hath done when so armed. Prior to such union, christians were persecuted ; after it took place they persecuted each other. Before, they could condemn and anathematize each other, but had not the power of doing more ; afterwards, the priests, by the assistance of their allies, the civil governors, could imprison, banish, torture and burn those who differed from them, and would not submit to their authority. Before, they could make creeds and declare articles of faith ; but they could not enforce them by frightful pains and penalties, as they did afterwards. They might be ambitious, corrupt, worldly minded, and aim at dominion over their brethren : but were without the means of carrying their ambitious views, and unchristian aims into effect : and of fully gratifying their corrupt inclinations ; they were necessarily dependent on the people, an outlawed and persecuted people, for their support and power ; when church and state became united it was far otherwise ; supported by the imperial power, they became independent of the people, the luxuries of the court, the honors and riches of the state gratified their corrupt passions, and soon rendered them more abundantly corrupt, and the

authority of the Emperor gave the force of law to their opinions and decisions. History sufficiently shows, that the destruction of christian liberty, the prostration of the human understanding, the enslaving of conscience, the enforcement of the opinions of a few men by pains and penalties, as the faith of the christian world, the legal establishment of a christian priesthood, and its gross corruption by worldly honors wealth and power; are to be reckoned among the fruits of a union between church and state, while that union was yet in its infancy. The servility of the priests, and their subservience to the court, however corrupt its measures, and the pernicious influence they frequently had at court, appears from the history of Constantine and his successors: indeed, they have ever shown themselves the most servile tools, of the worst governments, except when their own interests have been endangered, and have promoted the most arbitrary and oppressive measures, and in turn have been supported by the authors of such measures in their tyranny over the faith and consciences of men. Abundant proof of this might be produced from the history of the Stuarts who reigned in this country. It is with pleasure granted, that there have been persons who have ranked nominally as priests, in the worst times, who were of another spirit, to such these remarks are not applied.

The word church when coupled with the word state, is used in a very different sense to what we ever find it used in the New Testament. In the latter it either means the whole assembly of christians in any given place, or the whole collective body of the Disciples and followers of Jesus; but in the former case it seems intended to describe a particular class of men among christians, an ecclesiastical corporation, those who call themselves the clergy. This is a gross misapplication of the word; but it accords very well with the powers and prerogatives which the ecclesiastical corporation have assumed, and the claim they make to rank as a privileged order.

The union of church and state seems absolutely incompatible with genuine christianity. As taught by Jesus and his Apostles, christianity is divine both in its origin and nature, a

spiritual religion, called in the New Testament the kingdom of heaven; but the state is worldly in its origin and nature, a mere human and earthly institution. The constitution, laws, nature and end of the one and of the other are as different as heaven and earth. In the one every thing rests upon divine authority, is administered by Jesus Christ, is by faith, and is to be done according to the directions and commands of him whom God hath made the only head, Lord, Lawgiver and Judge in those matters. In the other every thing rests upon mere human authority, is administered by rulers appointed by men, and is to be done according to the laws agreed on by mere human legislators. How then can these be united and incorporated the one with the other? Such a heterogeneous union must be like that of iron and clay, in the feet and toes of Nebuchadnezzar's symbolical image. They cannot unite without the one or the other ceasing to be what it was before, without its nature being changed. Civil government cannot cease to be of a worldly nature, whilst human nature and the wants of society remain unchanged; but history fully shows that by its union with the civil power, the church has ceased to be what it originally was; that christianity has been greatly perverted and corrupted, and the church converted into a worldly kingdom, or an incorporated part of a worldly kingdom. As the church is symbolized in the Apocalypse as a woman, and spoken of as the spouse of Christ, on account of her unfaithfulness to him, and prostituting herself to others, she is, in the same symbolical style spoken of as a harlot, and said to have committed leudness with the kings of the earth; because she has submitted to them in religion, when she ought to have been devoted to Christ only, as a woman to her husband. Thus the unnatural union, we are considering, appears to be described by the voice of inspiration, as a vile prostitution of christianity to worldly powers, and as exposing the professors of it to the awful judgments of God: and who, that examines the subject, can help perceiving that, in consequence of such union, religion has frequently been converted into a mere engine of state for political purposes?

Whatever may be thought of the above, it is undeniable that

when Jesus Christ and his apostles first introduced christianity, and instituted the christian church, neither he nor they either placed, or used any means to place, it in connexion with the civil power, either in Judea or any other country ; nor did he or they give the least intimation that such a union should be sought when practicable. . Our Lord introduced his divine religion as entirely distinct from and independent of every government and state upon earth ; he instituted his church as a society completely separate from all previously established societies ; he spoke of his disciples as called out of the world, as forming a new kingdom, and as being absolutely separate and independent in all spiritual or religious matters ; at the same time he and his apostles taught christians to be subject to the civil powers every where ; nor did he interfere, in any direct way, with the existing governments and constitutions, or with such as men might hereafter form ; but taught that his kingdom was altogether of a spiritual or heavenly nature, and that his church was to exist as a distinct community, under a religious view, though at the same time belonging to the civil communities in the different nations where they, his disciples, lived. It is equally undeniable that the christian church existed separate from and quite independent of all the civil governments upon earth for nearly three centuries, until the emperor Constantine received it into a kind of alliance with the state. It is also evident that, during that long period, notwithstanding it was opposed by all the powers of the world, the dreadful persecutions christians suffered, and the determination of some of the emperors to root it out from among men, christianity continually spread in all directions, and established itself over a considerable part of the earth, in the only way in which it requires to be established, in the understandings and hearts of men ; so that before it had any connexion with the state a large proportion of the inhabitants of the Roman empire were become christians ; and it certainly, during that period, existed in greater purity than it did afterwards. The conclusion follows irresistibly, that the union of church and state was not necessary to the planting, spread, and success of christianity in the world : if it existed for ages

independently of the state, and notwithstanding the opposition it met with from all the powers of the world, and spread with so much success, it might have continued to exist, and have spread over the whole earth, though no union of church and state had ever taken place.

2. From the preceeding remarks it is evident, that christianity needed not the aid of the civil power, in order to its establishment, in the only way in which a spiritual religion can properly be said to be established: it cannot, however, be improper to consider this point a little more distinctly. Priestcraft, and the errors and corruptions which have prevailed under the christian name, needed the arm of worldly power fully to establish, and give them a permanent existence: and, in fact, these are the things which worldly power have established under the name of christianity; the vital parts which have been preserved amid so many corruptions, owe nothing to worldly power; for these all the powers on earth can neither establish nor destroy; and there is a vitality in the christian religion, which has ever preserved, and will ever preserve itself, where the New Testament is read, with whatever errors and superstition it may be surrounded. Unless worldly power could establish belief with the heart unto righteousness, the worship of God in spirit and truth, love to God and man, and a hope full of immortality, it cannot establish pure and genuine christianity. It may establish creeds and articles of faith, it may bribe men by worldly advantages to assent to them; but it cannot establish the real belief of them. It may establish a splendid ceremonial, and an extensive priesthood, a multifarious ritual, and imposing form of worship, and array its ministers in showy dresses, dignify them with titles, and give them wealth and power; but these things are not real christianity. Our Lord, in his good confession before Pontius Pilate, declared, "My kingdom is not of this world." This shows that it was not his design that christianity should be established by worldly power; for what is established by worldly power, evidently has human authority for its basis, every kingdom so established must be a worldly kingdom. In introducing christianity Jesus acted independ-

ently of worldly power; and when he sent forth his apostles to preach the gospel and plant the christian church, he gave them no worldly power to accomplish the great object, they were to do it by power from on high, and in despite of the opposition of worldly power every where. What is established by earthly governors and legislators is necessarily of human authority, is a worldly institution; but christianity and the christian church are of divine authority, are divine institutions. An apostle declares that, under the gospel dispensation, all things are of God, and are by Jesus Christ. Christians have a divine faith, divine precepts, divine promises, the hope of a heavenly inheritance. Christ is their only master, the New Testament their only standard of faith and rule in religion, and they are all brethren, their Ministers brethren and fellow servants. In an established church the members have a faith contained in creeds and articles devised by fallible men, laws and canons given by human authority, forms, ceremonies and modes of worship, prescribed by erring mortals like themselves, and some of them the hope and prospect of worldly honors and emoluments as the reward of their conformity; they have other masters in religion besides Christ, another standard and rule besides the New Testament, and their ministers, instead of being merely brethren and fellow servants, are priests and some of them lords. The christianity of the New Testament is always the same, under this view Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever. The christianity of established churches must vary as the opinions, or political views of the worldly powers which establishes them may happen to vary; and the same church may have a different faith and worship, a different constitution and government, at different times: which actually has been the case with some established churches. What worldly power established and supports, the same power may change or overthrow and destroy: let the laws, revenues, and patronage, by which the state upholds and supports an established church, be entirely withdrawn, and that church no longer exists, built as an establishment on worldly power, that power removed it instantly falls. Not so the true church of Christ;

he declared it to be built upon a rock, and that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. The advocates for churches established by worldly power, have endeavored to persuade the people that the safety and prosperity of the state depend on the preservation of the church ; this is by no means the case ; but certainly the safety and prosperity of such a church depends entirely upon the state : and it seems absurd to say, church and state, putting the church first, it looks like putting the creature before the creator. Would it not be more proper to say, state and church ?

3. True and genuine christianity needs not the patronage of the civil power, any more than its alliance, or to be established by it. Christianity has ever been most pure, and done best when left to itself. Jesus Christ and his apostles neither had nor sought the patronage of worldly governments, in propagating the gospel, and planting christianity in the world ; nor when they had planted it in any place, did they commit the tender plant to the guardian care of earthly rulers ; nor when they formed churches did they solicit for them the patronage of the civil magistrates : all they seem to have desired was the unmolested enjoyment of their christian liberty, and protection from violence, that the truth might have free course, run, and be glorified. Christianity made its way in the world without such patronage, until the idol temples were deserted, and the whole gigantic superstructure of heathen superstition, supported as it was by the mighty power of imperial Rome, and deeply as it had intrenched itself in the prejudices, habits and feelings of the people, tottered to its foundation, and the extensive success of what was still called the new religion, rendered it good policy for Constantine to offer it his patronage ; and the readers of ecclesiastical history, must know how dearly christianity paid for the imperial patronage ; that the patronage which the church found from the Emperor was something like what a chaste woman finds who puts herself under the protection, and into the power of an old debauchee.

4. If christianity, in its genuine state, needs not the patronage of the civil power, however much priests may need it for

the support of their power, and of the spurious christianity which they maintain, much less can it need or accept of the guardianship and protection of penal laws and statutes. All such laws and statutes for the defence of religion may be regarded as the offensive weapons of priestcraft. They are not necessary to guard true religion, that is not to be defended by any such carnal weapons; but to guard the absurd notions, and superstitious practices, the usurpations, honors, power and emoluments, of what is called the christian priesthood. If things were called by their names, prosecutions for heresy and blasphemy would be called, prosecutions for securing to the priests the uninterrupted practice of their craft, and the advantage of their subserviency for political purposes.

Not only did christianity exist and prosper in the first ages without the patronage of any state, or the protection of penal laws; that is now the case in some countries which might be mentioned. The identifying the interests of religion with state policy, may answer the end of priests; but it is a prostitution of religion, subversive of its great ends, and injurious to mankind.

R. WRIGHT.

(To be continued.)

The peculiarity in the language of the Prophets and Mesengers of God, to speak in the Person of God, applied to the Passages supposed to teach the Omnipresence of Christ.

To the Editors of the Christian Reflector.

GENTLEMEN,

Among the passages which are brought forward by Trinitarians in support of their doctrine, perhaps none are adduced with so great an air of triumph, as those which seem to teach his omnipresence. Such, for instance, as the following: Matt. xviii. 20, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them:" Matt. xxviii. 20: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." These our Triutitarian brethren think quite decisive of the controversy; for none but God, they argue, can be in all places at the same time.

But their inference is founded on a misapprehension of

scriptural phraseology. Whoever reads the scripture with attention, and compares passage with passage, must perceive, how frequently the prophets speak, and are spoken of, *in the person of God*. And considering this a very important principle of scriptural interpretation, as tending to throw light on many passages, otherwise dark and mysterious; I would solicit the favor to occupy a few pages of the Reflector, to elucidate the subject more fully. It may furnish, at least some of your readers, and those too, who have the least time to examine the Scripture, with a ready reply to their Trinitarian opponents; and others it may serve to establish, strengthen and settle. And if it answers these purposes, it will not be unserviceable in the cause of truth. Without further preface, therefore, I proceed to produce a number of instances in support of the above proposition; namely, that "the prophets frequently speak, and are frequently spoken of, *in the person of God*."

Exodus xx. 1, 12: "and God spake all these words, saying, *honor thy father and thy mother.*"

Here it is evident that *God* speaks and says, "*honor, &c.*" But see Mark vii. 9, 10: "and he said unto them, full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition; for *Moses* said, *honor thy father and thy mother.*"

Here it is plainly declared, that *Moses* said &c. Does then scripture contradict itself? No. The prophet speaks in the person of God, and God speaks by the prophet.

Thus again, Deut. xxxii. 21: "they have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation."

Here it is God that speaks, and says, he will do this. But turn to Romans x. 19, and we shall see that it is the prophet of God. "*Moses* saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation will I anger you."

What can be more evident? In the former instance it is God that speaks; in the latter it is *Moses*.

Again. Num. xiv. 26, 27, "and the Lord spake unto *Moses* and unto *Aaron*, saying, how long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against me?"

In this passage it is the Lord against whom the people murmur. But in the 2nd verse of the same chapter, it is, "and all the children of Israel murmured against *Moses* and against *Aaron*, the prophets of God."

Thus, to murmur against *Moses* and *Aaron*, is to murmur against God; and to murmur against God, is to murmur against *Moses* and *Aaron*, the prophets of God.

These instances would be quite sufficient to establish the

point. But I wish to shew that this peculiar phraseology is not a mere casual thing; but that it runs through the scriptures and that nothing is more common. And this more especially, as our Trinitarian brethren, with very great inconsistency, and very great injustice, are apt to reproach us with the scarcity of our passages. It is of little consequence how plain they are, or how forcible; they want numbers; and numbers they must have, or they think they have nothing. It may therefore be well to multiply proofs, though the argument be complete and most convincing.

In the next place, then, I would refer to Isaiah lxxv. 1; and its parallel Romans x. 20. "I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not."

"But Esaias is very bold and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me."

In the one verse, the words are used by the Almighty; and in the other, they are ascribed to his prophet.

Psalm lxxxviii. 19, 20: "yea, they spake against God; they said, can God furnish a table in the wilderness? Behold he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed."

Num. xx. 8, 11: "and the people chode with Moses, and spake, saying, would God that we had died before the Lord! And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock; and the water came out abundantly."

Here, again, the very same transactions are spoken of in reference to the prophet of God, and to God himself. The people speak against God; they speak against Moses. It is God that strikes the rock, and the waters gush out;—it is Moses that strikes the rock, and the waters gush out.

Deut. vii. 18, 19: "thou shalt not be afraid of them; but shalt well remember what the Lord thy God did unto Pharaoh, and unto all Egypt; the great temptations which thine eyes saw, and the signs and the wonders, and the mighty hand, and the stretched out arm whereby the Lord thy God brought thee out."

Deut. xxxiv. 10, 11, 12: "and there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face: in all the signs and the wonders, which the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land, and in all that mighty land, and all the great terror which Moses shewed in the sight of all Israel."

In the first instance, the miracles which were wrought in Egypt, are ascribed to God. In the second, they are ascribed to Moses. "The wonders, and signs, and mighty hand, which Moses shewed in the sight of all Israel." How did Moses shew them? As the agent or instrument of God. He then stood and acted in the person of God.

But further; Deut. viii. 2, and xxxii. 12: "The Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness. The Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange God with him."

Deut. xxix. 2-6: "and Moses called unto Israel, and said unto them, ye have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land; the great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signs and those great miracles: yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day. And I have led you forty years in the wilderness, &c."

Nothing, I think, can be more evident from these parallel passages, than that "the Lord alone did lead the Israelites forty years in the wilderness;" and that "Moses led them forty years in the wilderness." If then we are not to affirm, that Moses was the Lord God of Israel; we must admit, that he spoke and acted in the person of God. There is, I think, no alternative.

Deut. xiv. 2: "thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God; and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself."

Deut. ix. 12: "and the Lord said unto me, arise, get thee down quickly from hence for *thy* people which *thou* hast brought forth out of Egypt, &c."

In the former passage, the Israelites are the peculiar people of God; or they are his people alone; they belong to nobody else. In the latter, they are the people of Moses. Moses then is either God, or he stands in the person of God.

Deut. xxxi. 7, 8: "and Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, be strong and of good courage; for thou must go with this people unto the land which the Lord hath sworn unto their fathers to give them, and thou shalt cause them to inherit it. And the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee, he will be with thee."

Deut. xxxi. 22, 23: "Moses therefore wrote this song the same day, and taught it the children of Israel. And he gave Joshua the son of Nun a charge, and said, be strong and of good courage: for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I swear unto them, and I will be with thee."

In the former of these passages, it is said, the Lord was to go with Joshua; in the latter, that Moses was to go with him. But Moses was then an hundred and twenty years old, and he could no more go out and come in; he was at the point of death. How then did he go with Joshua? In the same sense as Jesus Christ is with his disciples on the earth; in the person of God. As the prophet of God he declared what God himself would do though he speaks in his own name; "I will be with thee." It is thus that we see the force of the passage,

Heb. i. 1, 2, "God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." It is he who speaks to us through them; though they speak without any preface, as of themselves. Thus, when our Saviour says, Matt. xviii. 20: "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them;" Matt. xxviii. 20 "lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world;" and John xiv. 18, "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you;" we are to remember his words, John xii. 49, "I have not spoken of myself;" and John xiv. 24, "the word which ye hear is not mine, but the father's which sent me." Like all the prophets of God, he acts and speaks in the person of God; though he does not on every occasion, any more than the prophets themselves stop to preface his words by such a remark; well knowing, that to those who were familiar with the scriptures, his meaning would be perfectly understood.

(To be continued.)

To the Editors of the Christian Reflector.

GENTLEMEN,

Your correspondent *Joe Stubbs* wishes for an explanation of what he conceives a difficulty in the expression of Nebuchadnezzar, Dan. iii. 25, "The form of the fourth is like the Son of God."

I would observe that the original is not "*the Son of God*," but "*a Son of God*," and upon this mistranslation of the word, commentators have asserted, that the person Nebuchadnezzar saw, or supposed he saw, was Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ, or Son of God. This opinion cannot be admitted, for Jesus of Nazareth, who was the Christ, the Son of God, was not then in existence. Besides, it is absurd to suppose that a heathen king could have any knowledge, even in a prophetic sense, of such a character.

The term Son of God, in the Old Testament, and in the eastern languages, generally denotes a mighty or powerful one, and is an appellation given to rulers, judges, prophets, and priests, under the Jewish dispensation. It is applied in the present day to eastern monarchs. In the heathen mythology it was applied to those ideal beings who were supposed to be the messengers of the gods, the agents and the executors of their will.

In the agitated and distracted state of mind in which the king of Babylon is represented, his imagination might create to himself an ideal form, and consistently with the theology of his nation, on finding the three Hebrews safe, he would attribute their safety to the interference of some supernatural being, and this being, real or imaginary, he calls "*a Son of God*," or a powerful or majestic being, which he afterwards, verse 28, calls "*an angel*."

All that can be inferred from the passage I conceive is, that the appearance, whether real or imaginary, was such as the heathen theology had represented as a messenger of the gods, a son of the *Aleim*, and as Nebuchadnezzar afterwards ascribed the deliverance of these Jews to the power of their god, he calls this ideal personage an angel of that god, see verse 28.

Perhaps some of your correspondents may favor us with their opinion on this subject. I am Mr. Stubbs' and yours, respectfully,

JEREMIAH STYLES.

PIOUS FRAUDS.—In the “Legation of Moses,” bishop Warburton, in order to warrant some abuse of a pagan philosopher, pretends to quote from Cicero’s Oration for Flaccus, a declaration, that “it is unworthy of the majesty of the empire to adore only one God.” It will perhaps hardly be believed—(says Voltaire in his Philosophical Dictionary)—that there is not a word of this in the Oration for Flaccus, or in any of Cicero’s works! Falsehoods of this sort, and lying stories about the death-beds of people of different theological opinions, betray a poor opinion of the innate strength of christianity, on the part of its own ministers.

A learned divine, who sought to convince a poor and unlearned mechanic of the truth of the doctrine of the trinity, founded his argument principally upon 1 John v. 7., to which the mechanic replied, Do you not know, sir, that that passage is an interpolation? Why, y—e—s, I know it, but I did not suspect that you did. This needs no comment.

WILFUL BLINDNESS—Robert Robinson, of Cambridge, was one day engaged in conversation, on the Principles of Dissent, with some of the learned Doctors of that University. All the arguments advanced by Robinson in its favor were replied to by each of the D. D.’s with “*I can’t see it.*” Robinson took his pencil and wrote on a slip of paper the name of God in Greek (Theos). Can you see that, gentlemen? Yes, was the reply. He then covered the word with a guinea. Now, gentlemen, can you see it? No: they replied. The reason is obvious, said Robinson.

Religious Intelligence.

On Thursday, August 12th, a very numerous and most respectable body of gentlemen professing Unitarian Christianity, gave a dinner at the Spread Eagle Inn, in honor of the Rev. John Grundy, the minister of Cross Street chapel, and for the purpose of presenting to him a handsome Silver Tea Service, as a testimony of their high regard for the zeal he has evinced in the cause of Unitarian Christianity. At four o’clock about 120 persons sat down to a good, substantial dinner; Richard Potter, Esq. was the President, and Benjamin Naylor, Esq. the Vice-President. The Rev. Mr. Grundy sat on the right hand of the Chairman, and his colleague, the Rev. J. G. Robberds, at his left. The Service of Plate was introduced amidst much applause. It appeared extremely chaste and elegant, and is the workmanship of Messrs. Ollivant and Sons. It bore the following inscription:

Presented to
THE REV. JOHN GRUNDY,
by the Congregation
assembling in the Chapel, Cross Street, Manchester,
IN TESTIMONY
of their high respect for the
distinguished ability and manly zeal
with which he has advocated amongst them
the Cause of
Unitarian Christianity.
1824.

Mr. Potter now rose, (much affected) and in presenting to the Rev. Mr. Grundy this handsome tribute spoke as follows:—In discharging the duty which the situation I am placed in imposes upon me, I have now to call your attention to the particular purpose for which we are assembled together; a purpose which excites, in my mind, feelings of the most lively, and at the same time the most opposing nature. I cannot take leave of a valued and worthy minister without sorrow; and I cannot contemplate the testimony which this occasion presents of your regard for him, without the highest gratification. And, gentlemen, feeling as I do, the warmest interest in the welfare and happiness of Mr. Grundy, it affords me some

satisfaction to be thus called upon to convey to him your sentiments. I must not, however, attempt this without intreating your indulgence for the imperfect manner in which, I fear, I shall express myself; but, surrounded as I am with friends, I am encouraged to hope that such indulgence will not be withheld. In presenting you, sir, with this Service of Plate, it is necessary to advert to the advantages which the Cross Street congregation have derived from your ministerial labors; and those advantages will, probably, be best understood by referring to the circumstances in which the congregation was placed at the time of your appointment. From the death of the Rev. Mr. Seddon, which, I believe, took place in 1769, to your election, and that of my other esteemed friend on my left, (being upwards of 40 years,) the important and peculiar doctrines of Unitarian belief, were rarely, indeed I believe scarcely ever urged on the attention of the congregation. In avoiding the discussion, and even the declaration of the particular principles of the congregation over which your predecessors presided, there can be no doubt that those gentlemen had satisfied their own minds that they were executing their duties in a manner best calculated for public usefulness; and though I do not concur in the views which regulated their conduct, yet I censure them not, for they acted conscientiously; the tomb has closed upon them with honor—and I participate in the respect with which their memory is regarded. The effect, however, of their conduct was such, that when you, sir, entered on your office of minister, Unitarian doctrines were little understood by many of the congregation; by some they were not even recognized. On your part, therefore, it required a strong sense of duty, and a more than an ordinary degree of zeal and fortitude to encounter that spirit of hostility, with which from the then prevailing prejudices, the avowal and introduction of such doctrines were regarded. Happily, sir, the attainments and the qualities of mind, which are required to develope and defend the system of pure christianity, which we profess, were found in you; and it was the earnest and able exertion of those qualities and attainments, to effect this important purpose, which has, in a great measure, produced that decided Unitarian tone and character which the Cross Street congregation now enjoys. But sir, our acknowledgments should not be confined to the beneficial results upon your own congregation of those discussions, which in this neighborhood you originated; they have operated more extensively; they have given an impulse to Unitarian inquiry, and your example and success have stimulated others to the open avowal and propagation of pure and primitive christianity. We are constantly, sir, hearing of the fame of preachers whose sentiments are pompously denominated orthodox and evangelical; how deserving, then, are ministers like you, who hold and teach a faith, in our estimation, much better, and purer; and who in the fearless discharge of their duty, in the words of your farewell text, “have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God.” Sir, the recollection of the advantages which, as members of a dissenting congregation, we have derived from your labors, and the kind and consoling attentions which many amongst us have received from you, when afflictions have pressed them, will secure for you, in your separation from us, a durable and affectionate regard. As a testimony of this regard, it is now my pleasing duty to present you with this Service of Plate, and to express to you the most sincere and earnest wishes for your future health, welfare and happiness.

The Rev. Mr. Grundy said, It was impossible for him not to be deeply agitated with emotion on such an occasion as the present; nor could he, in any degree, find language for the feelings that affected him; for how could he acknowledge to his kind friend in the chair the high encomiums he had passed upon him—how could he express his obligations to those gentlemen who, in the last fortnight, had sent him many most affectionate letters expressive of their esteem—or how could he thank them for the noble present they had now given him? It was impossible to remove from any

stage of useful activity without regret; and it had been his lot to change more than once—the Cross Street congregation being the third with which he had been connected—and from all of them he had received the greatest kindness, but from none so great as from that he was now addressing. It was an additional source of regret, that he and his congregation had not been better acquainted; and he wished, in his heart, that it had been otherwise. Such an acquaintance would have added to his happiness, and to their comforts. In such large towns as Manchester, a minister had great difficulties in obtaining a knowledge of his congregation; and in his own case, it happened that he seldom met his congregation except in the walls of the chapel on Sundays. But it was not altogether with emotions of regret that he separated from them, for some advantages, he thought, might arise from an occasional change of ministers. A change might stimulate activity—it might increase the attachment of the congregation to the remaining minister—it might excite greater zeal in the minister that left, and occasion the public avowal of opinions in places where they had not been previously propagated. It was also an additional pleasure in him in leaving, that the circumstance had drawn from his congregation so ample a testimony of their attachment to the principles they professed. It had been the singular fortune of the Cross Street congregation never to have changed their ministers, except when age and infirmity, or death, had rendered it necessary. Singular also was their conduct in this instance of one of them leaving—for he had no recollection, that on a similar occasion, any congregation had given to their minister a testimonial of their regard equal to that he had the honor of receiving. It often, indeed, happened, that the quitting of a minister was occasioned by some difference with his congregation, or produced itself a temper of hostility on one side or the other. He remembered an instance in which a minister, in taking leave of his congregation, had told them in the morning, that he had forty-seven charges against them; twenty-seven of which he should then urge, and the remaining twenty he should prefer in the afternoon. He remembered another instance where a minister had raked up the ashes of the dead, for the means of censuring his hearers. He was, however, happy to have no ground of complaint; since he had come amongst them, he had experienced nothing but kindness, both from the congregation as a body, and from the trustees; even in pecuniary concerns, the conditions had been more than fulfilled, the trustees having regularly increased the stipend of himself and his esteemed colleague, till, at that time, they were in receipt of nearly one hundred pounds per annum more than had been promised. He would not detain the Meeting longer than to express his deep obligations to his worthy colleague for the uniform kindness he had shewn to him. Whatever sacrifices of feeling, which his wishes or convenience had, at any time, required, (and such occasions might have mutually arisen,) had been most cheerfully made; and, he hoped, returned. Assisting each other to the utmost of their power, they had enjoyed every comfort and happiness in their joint labors. He concluded by expressing anxious wishes for the happiness and prosperity of his congregation—for their increased success in religious principles, and for their domestic and eternal welfare.

“The colleague of our late worthy minister, the Rev. J. G. Robberds, and may the Cross Street congregation long be benefited by his valuable services.”

Rev. J. G. Robberds said, he could not but receive pleasure from the expression of kindness to him; and though grateful at receiving a proof that his services were not unacceptable to them, yet such a mark of approbation produced in his mind a feeling of jealousy lest he might be influenced in his conduct by any other than the motives which, as a christian minister, ought to predominate in his mind. They had expressed a wish that his services might be continued to them, and so long as they were satisfied with a minister, not for any approbation he might bestow upon them, but for the performance of christian duties, in rebuking their fail-

ings, and exhorting them to the practice of religious excellence, and so long as life and health should be spared to him, they might have his services. To be present this day to witness the tribute bestowed on one of their ministers, would be an encouragement to him, if he stood in need of encouragement, to labor in the support of truth—but he had been present that day where he had received encouragement far more congenial to his mind. It had been his lot to stand beside the sick bed of a friend who, in health, would have rejoiced in being present on this occasion, but who, he feared, might never more be seen among them. Impressed as that friend was with the consciousness of departing existence, he had inquired from him the state of his feelings and opinions at the near prospect of death. He answered, that, for upwards of twenty years, he had made his religious principles the subject of most serious and anxious consideration, and he now found them abundantly sufficient for his support on that most solemn occasion. This was the kind of encouragement most satisfactory to him. To find that the principles he taught imparted comfort and consolation in the closing hours of life, was to him a source of happiness. (This pathetic allusion powerfully affected the meeting.) He had, last night, conversed with one who had formerly been a Unitarian, and who had had many opportunities of knowing their conduct, and he found from reasoning with him, that though he acknowledged the general propriety of their domestic habits, yet he urged that they were deficient in reverential regard for religious exercises, that the cultivation of devotional feelings was too much neglected in their education. He had heard this charge against Unitarians, and must admit, that there were amongst them, as, no doubt, there were among other religious classes, many who neither understood nor felt the importance and value of their religious duties. If Unitarian ministers would preach with effect and usefulness, they must, in every respect be true disciples of their master, and to follow his example was the great test of being his disciples. He had come to join in the expression of respect and attachment to his worthy colleague. As far as he knew, those feelings were entertained by every individual who was acquainted with him—he believed that sincere esteem and wishes for his happiness, were universal. For himself, he would say, that, in the separation, it required much of his sense of duty, and other motives, to enable him to look forward with confidence to the future discharge of his ministerial labors. In his younger days, he had heard that there was considerable risk of unhappiness in being united with another, as the minister of one congregation. But his experience made him wonder how such an opinion could originate, for he had found on the contrary, that having a colleague lessened his anxiety, and, in all respects, contributed to his comfort.—In occasional absence, or indisposition, his mind was relieved by knowing that his congregation did not suffer from these causes, but all the duties required from him were well supplied by his friend; between whom and himself there had never been any feeling of ill-will, nor the slightest shadow of such a feeling. He was aware that his future comfort depended much on the choice of a colleague, but he had every confidence in the anxiety of his congregation to make such a choice as would contribute to their own and his satisfaction and advantage. His wish was, that they might find a colleague for him equally distinguished for entire frankness of character as him from whom they were now separated. He assured his late colleague, and the Meeting, of the sentiments of regard he felt for them, and concluded by wishing, from the bottom of his heart, that Mr. Grundy might, through life, enjoy all the satisfaction a christian minister could desire.

“The Rev. George Harris, and may the zeal which he has been instrumental in kindling prove itself to be such as ought to burn in every christian bosom.”

Mr. Harris addressed the Meeting to the following effect.—I beg to thank you, most sincerely, for the honor you have conferred upon me in drinking my health. I should be wanting in feeling, were I not to be grateful for the kind manner in

which my name has been received by this respectable company ; I can truly say, that I receive it both as a reward and an encouragement. I have felt very great satisfaction in being enabled, by the kindness of friends, to join with you this day, in expressing our mutual obligations to our respected friend on your right. I have said, mutual obligations ; for, though I have not had the advantages which you have enjoyed, of being one of his stated hearers, or of forming part of the society over which he was one of the esteemed and respected pastors, yet, for many of my greatest pleasures I am indebted to that individual. Mr. Grundy may, perhaps, be surprised, but I hope not displeased, when I state to this company, that it was principally owing to the sentiments, which I heard him deliver in London, in the year 1811, and to the exertions which he made to diffuse a spirit of inquiry in this town—the influence of which has been felt through the kingdom—that I was led to quit the business in which I was at that period engaged, and to devote myself to the christian ministry. I feel myself, in some measure, indebted to that respected individual ; and, therefore, it is that I have experienced great satisfaction in being able to be present at this Meeting, to join with you, in the expression of your thanks to him for his services as your pastor, and also for the opportunity it affords me of begging him, at the same time, to accept my own personal acknowledgments.—I well remember, that at the period to which I allude, that individual dwelt much upon the vital importance of preaching the truths of Unitarian Christianity to the poor ;—upon our attention being directed, not merely to one class of society, (and that class the rich and powerful,) but that it was absolutely necessary, our individual and united efforts should be directed and devoted to the instruction and the melioration of the condition of the great mass of the people. It is a lesson which I hope I have never forgotten ; it is a lesson which I trust I have invariably endeavored to reduce to practice. I wish the great mass of mankind to be not merely hewers of wood, and drawers of water, but rational and enlightened beings ; and, therefore, it is I am anxious they should know the truth, believing as I do, that the truth will make them free. The human race has been long enough, I think, like Isachar crouching down between the two burdens of ecclesiastical and civil despotism. I wish them to know their rights as the children of God, and the heirs of immortality, that knowing, they may dare to maintain them. Indifference on such a subject, by those who have really felt the value of the principles they profess to believe, appears to me to be a thing which it is almost impossible to imagine ;—and as to timidity, where truth and duty are concerned, no one can be a Christian reformer whilst that quality forms a prominent part of his character. Truth ought to be openly advocated whether people will hear, or whether they will forbear.—Those who seriously mark the signs of the times, and whose minds are alive to the interests of humanity, must be convinced, that the present period is peculiarly favourable to the dissemination of correct principles on every subject of human interest or inquiry. There are periods, certainly, in which the mind of man seems to slumber, in which truth appears to have no beauty that she should be desired : and when knowledge and freedom are totally disregarded. But the present, I take it is not such a period. Now, the human mind is active and stirring. Long pressed down by creeds and kindred abominations, it is now, with a giant's strength, casting them by as the tales of other times, and is bursting forth in all the vigor and maturity of its powers. The toys which pleased, or which frightened the infancy of humanity, will be despised in the manhood of its nature ;—and it is much to be feared, unless the advocates of pure and undefiled religion, boldly proclaim their principles, that, along with the old wrinkled skin of corruption, many may cast away at the time, the pure and perfect form of truth. If the friends of rational belief stand aloof whilst men's minds are thus busy, this must inevitably be the case. Indifference, therefore, now to the peculiar doctrines, by the belief of which we are distinguished, must be an error of the greatest magnitude ; and may be pregnant with incalculable mischiefs.—Mr. Wilberforce, as you no doubt recollect, sir, once characterized Unitarianism as the half-way house to Infidelity. His assertion was given with an insinuation, and a sneer, or else, I think, there are affirmations much more wide of the truth, than even this assertion of the honorable gentleman's ; for Unitarianism I believe to be the half-way house between Infidelity on the one hand, and Fanaticism on the other. I trust many of us have felt, that it is a pleasant and salubrious abode, cheering to the heart, and invigorating to the mind, equally removed from the demon warmth of superstition—and the iceberg coldness of irreligion : and, therefore, we must be anxious, if we be men of benevolence, that the number of our happy companions should be increased. But, if we stand idly by, and never point the attention of our fellow-

creatures to the comforts of our habitation, we are justly chargeable with connivance at the errors into which human beings may fall, in consequence of our negligence ;—we are guilty of inflicting upon them, as far as our power goes, one of the torments of Milton's hell—they are first steeped in the liquid fire of superstition, and then plunged into the soul-congealing cold of infidelity. Every man, then, endowed with benevolent affections, who has embraced Unitarianism, as the truth of the living God, must be anxious, if he feel correctly, that his principles should be openly advocated, and constantly kept before the minds of his fellow-creatures, and that the good and knowledge of freedom, may, by these means, be carried to every cottage in the land.—I am confident that I am addressing men of liberality and intelligence ; men who are anxious for the improvement, the freedom, and the happiness of the race of which they form a part ; and, therefore, I am the more desirous of impressing on your minds the vast and unspeakable importance of Unitarianism, as a means of human civilization and instruction. This is a point of view in which, I think, it has not yet been sufficiently considered, even by its friends ; but it is one of which I think, it is admirably deserving, and which will appear the more clearly, if we contrast for a moment, the spirit which the two opposing systems are calculated to generate. For what is the spirit of Orthodoxy ? Is it not a slavish spirit ! but the spirit of Unitarianism is one of rational and enlightened liberty. The spirit of Orthodoxy is a mean spirit, for it bends before the dictation of a worm of the earth, and its essence consists, as its own advocates aver, in the " prostration of the human understanding ;" but the spirit of Unitarianism is open, generous, liberal. The one is partial and capricious, viewing the favorites of Heaven only in a selected few ; whilst Unitarianism sees in every man, a brother, training up for the glorious importance which awaits all the family of the Eternal. The spirit of Orthodoxy is a cruel and vindictive spirit ; witness its excommunications and its inquisitions :—the spirit of Unitarianism is merciful and benevolent ; anxious for man's rights, and detesting revenge. The spirit of Orthodoxy is one of persecution :—look at the Athanasian creeds, and Test and Corporation Acts ; see the unbeliever—oh ! shame and scandal !—even in the nineteenth century, dragged before the tribunal of man, to answer for his supposed want of faith, and behold judges acting under the abused name of that Christianity, which, they say, is part and parcel of the law of the land, inflicting sentences, which even the worst of crimes would scarcely sanction ; but Unitarianism is free as the winds of heaven, and desires that every human creature may be so too. Orthodoxy says it encourages inquiry ; it may do so to a certain point ; but when a human being arrives at that, it is the language of its deeds, hitherto shalt thou go, but no further.—Unitarianism, however, has no land-marks on the shores of knowledge—like the swelling waves of the ocean, it is spirit and it is life. Orthodoxy would strip a man of the name of Christian, and would shut him out from all the rewards of heaven, unless he can pronounce the *shibboleth* of an intolerant party ; whilst Unitarianism affirms, that in every nation, aye, and in every sect, he who feareth God, and worketh righteousness, shall be accepted of him. Orthodoxy is bound up in creeds and confessions, and articles of faith, with inky blots, and rotten parchment bonds :—but Unitarianism, like the word of the ever-living Jehovah, is not, and cannot be bound. Orthodoxy is gloom, and darkness, and desolation, —Unitarianism is light, and liberty, and joy. The influence of this system on human civilization, human liberty, and human happiness, has already been tried ; it has been tried for ages ; and its direful and demoralizing effects may be read in the history of every nation under the sun. It has been weighed, sir, and has it not been found most miserably wanting ? Let the state-craft, and the priest-craft, the war and the slavery, by which mankind have been cursed for ages, answer the question. What then remains ; but that every friend of his species should unite, in trying the effects of the other system ? Providence is manifestly aiding the labors of its avowed defenders, by raising up advocates where we should least have expected to find them—amongst the political economists of our common country. It has long ago been said, that if you touch John Bull's pocket, it has a wonderful effect in enlightening his understanding. And depend upon it, the political economists of England, will one day put it to him—whether it be worth while to pay two hundred thousand pounds a-year for *each* of the thirty-nine articles, and the Athanasian creed to boot, and it requires no great sagacity, I think, to foretell in which way he will answer the question. The time will assuredly come, when churches, established by divine grace, and the end of the bayonet, and the constable's staff, will be known no more, —and when the altar, whether of the unknown God, or with thirty-nine horns, on which to impale the con-

sciences of human beings, will be remembered only as things that have been. In the full confidence that such a period is approaching, I cannot frame a better wish for you, myself, and the race of man, than that the individual and united efforts of all the friends of human perfectibility, may cause the truth to issue forth armed with all the omnipotence of her author;—may she chase from the world all its ills, and give to and bless mankind with her own charities. The bright and hallowed visions of the poet—the expectations of the philanthropist—and the belief of the christian, will thus, and only thus be realized.—Yes, sir,

“When the glad slave shall at her feet lay down
His broken chain; the tyrant-lord his crown;
The priest his book; the conqueror his wreath;
And from the lips of Truth, one mighty breath
Shall like a whirlwind scatter in its breeze
The whole dark pile of human mockeries;—
Then shall the reign of Mind commence on earth,
And starting fresh as from a second birth,
Man in the sunshine of the world's new spring,
Shall walk in glory like a holy thing.”

*** Several other excellent Speeches were delivered in the course of the evening, which we are obliged to omit for want of room.

THE Rev. John Grundy, late of Manchester, entered on his pastoral charge as the minister of the Unitarian congregation assembling in Paradise Street, Liverpool. He delivered an excellent discourse on the public duties of a christian minister, from the exhortation of Paul to Timothy, 2 Epistle ii. 15. The service was introduced in a very affecting manner by the Rev. John Yates; this is the first time Mr. Yates has officiated since the afflictive occurrence in October last.

Original Poetry.

TO-MORROW.

Boast not thyself of days to come,
Nor cherish present sorrow;
Know thou art hast'ning to the tomb,
And thine is not to-morrow.

The present day thy Maker gives,
Then banish care and sorrow;
Know God is good, and ever lives,
To him belongs to-morrow.

Kindred and friends around thee die;
But why indulge in sorrow?

Thy moments too how quick they fly!
Thou may'st be gone to-morrow.

Vain are the projects mortals form,
Children of care and sorrow;
Unlook'd for comes a ruthless storm,
And blights their promised morrow.

Tho' man must die and turn to dust,
For this why should we sorrow?
God will restore to life the just,
And give a glorious morrow.

Life passes like a tale that's told,
And days fly like an arrow;
Whate'er of earthly things we hold
Will all be gone to-morrow. R. W.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

M. is received and shall have an early insertion. The length of the Report of the Speeches at the Unitarian Dinner at Manchester has compelled us to omit several favors which were intended for the present Number.

We have been solicited from different quarters to enlarge our publication on the commencement of the next Volume, and to publish the Numbers at Six-pence each. The subject is under consideration. The next Volume will be printed in a handsome new type.

The correspondent who inquires respecting the Missionary Society, is referred to the proper authorities, resident in Manchester, as we are not in possession of any information relative to that body.

The Christian Reflector,

AND THEOLOGICAL INQUIRER.

"I speak as unto wise men ; judge ye what I say." PAUL.

No. 63. LIVERPOOL, NOVEMBER 1st, 1824. Price 4½d

BIBLICAL CRITICISM.

JOB XIX. 25—29.

THIS celebrated passage is brought forward by most Commentators, to prove that the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead was known and believed by the writer of the poem. It seems much more consistent and rational to conclude, that the opinion of the Hero of the poem went no further than the belief that God would vindicate him; that although his character was traduced, his motives misinterpreted, and all his actions viewed through the medium of prejudice, mixed with a considerable portion of inalignity; though men despised him, yet his vindicator would appear for him. We recommend the following remarks of Dr. Kennicott to our readers.

The conviction, which I suppose Job to express here is this—that, though his dissolution was hastening on, amidst the unjust accusations of his pretended friends, and the cruel insults of his hostile relations; and though whilst he was thus singularly oppressed with anguish of mind, he was also tortured with pains of body; torn by sores and ulcers from head to foot, and sitting upon dust and ashes: yet that still, out of that miserable body, in his flesh thus stripped of skin, and nearly dropping into the grave, HE SHOULD SEE GOD; who would appear in his favour and vindicate THE INTEGRITY of his character. This opinion may, perhaps, be fairly and fully supported—by the sense of the words themselves—by the context—and by the following remarks.

We read in ii. 7—that *Job was smitten with sore boils from the sole of his feet unto his crown*: and (ver. 8) *he sat among the ASHES*. In vii. 5, Job says—*my flesh is clothed with worms, and clods of DUST: my skin is broken, and become loathsome*. In xvi. 19: *also now, behold my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high*. Then come the words of Job, in xix. 25—

20. And then, in opposition to what Job had just said—that God would soon appear to vindicate him—and that even his accusing *friends* would acquit him—Zophar says that *the heaven* would reveal his iniquity; and *the earth* would rise up against him. Lastly: this opinion concerning Job's words (as to GOD's *vindication* of him) is confirmed strongly at the end of the book, which records the conclusion of Job's history. His firm hope is here supposed to be, that, *before his death*, he should *with his bodily eyes* see GOD *appearing and vindicating his character*. And from the conclusion we learn, that GOD did thus appear—*now* (says Job) *mine eye seeth thee*. And then did GOD most effectually, and for ever, brighten the glory of Job's fame, by four times calling him HIS SERVANT; and, as his anger was kindled against Job's *friends*, by speaking to them in the following words—*ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as MY SERVANT Job hath—Go to MY SERVANT Job and MY SERVANT Job shall pray for you—in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like MY SERVANT Job.* 42; 7, 8.

Our present version of this celebrated passage is this:

25. For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter (DAY) upon the earth. 26. And though after my skin (WORMS) destroy this (BODY) yet in my flesh shall I see God: 27. Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another: though my reins be consumed within me. 28. But ye should say, why persecute we him seeing the root of the matter is found in me? 29. Be ye afraid of the sword: for wrath bringeth the punishments of the sword, that ye may know there is a judgment.

The new version of this passage now follows:

25. ואני ידעתי באלי חי ואחרון על עפר יקום:

25. For I know, that my Vindicator liveth;
and He at the last shall arise over *this* dust.

26. ואחר צורי נקפו זאת ומבשרי אחזה אלוה:

26. And, after that mine adversaries have mangled me thus,
even in my flesh shall I see God:

27. אשר אני אחזה לי ועיני ראו ולא זר כלי כליתי בחקי:

27. Whom I shall see on my side
and mine eyes shall behold, but not estranged *from me*:
all this have I made up in mine own bosom.

28. כי תאמרו מה נרדף לו שרש דבר נמצא בי :

28. Verily ye shall say, "why have we persecuted him ;
"seeing, the truth of the matter is found with him?"

29. גורו לכם מפני חרב כי חמה עינות חרב למען חרעון שדון :

29. Tremble for yourselves, at the face of the sword ;
for the sword waxeth hot against iniquities ;
therefore be assured, that judgment will take place

Remarks on Select Passages, &c.

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY DEFENDED, AND PRIEST-CRAFT EXPLODED.

(Continued from page 229.)

Sect. 10.—Effects of the union of christianity with the civil power, and its political establishment. Defence of christianity by carnal weapons, and its propagation by worldly means. Compulsatory support of the christian ministry.

I. AFTER what has been stated in the preceding section, it may be proper to take a summary view of the effects produced by the union of christianity with the civil power, and its political establishment. These effects were such as might have been expected, and have prepared the way for that ecclesiastical tyranny which enslaved both the bodies and souls of men, trampled under its feet every thing sacred, brought nations and their kings under its yoke, and rendered priestcraft triumphant.

1. This unnatural union placed christianity upon an entirely new ground. Hitherto it stood on the basis of divine revelation and divine authority ; without any foundation to support it but its own evidences, truth and excellency, and the influence of it extended over the hearts and lives of men. Now it was taken from its original ground and placed on the foundation of worldly power and authority, the decision of councils called and headed by the emperor, sanctioned and enforced by his decrees, and the whole weight of his power and influence. Thus, instead of being purely a divine, it became an imperial religion, and part and parcel of the law of the empire. Thus the authority of Christ, the only Lord of christians, and the laws which he gave, were put under the control of the civil power, and the

prerogatives of the great head of the church invaded by, or rather transferred to, earthly rulers, who usurped the management of his religion and church.

2. The union of christianity with the civil power, was quickly followed by the erection of other standards of faith besides that which Jesus set up, and other laws to regulate the church besides those which he gave. Now creeds were formed, and ecclesiastical laws made, to bind the understandings and consciences of christians, and rendered authoritative by the imperial sanction. Thus the sufficiency of the New Testament as the standard of christian faith, and the rule of christian practice, was virtually denied, christian liberty taken away, and the rights of conscience and of individual judgment, trampled under foot.

3. By this union the church of God was converted into a worldly kingdom. Carnal ordinances and a worldly sanctuary were substituted in the place of spiritual worship and the heavenly things of the gospel. Worldly titles and honors took the place of shame and reproach for Christ, and glorying in the cross. Earthly emoluments, and such rewards as the emperor could bestow, now animated the hope of ecclesiastics, instead of an inheritance beyond the grave. Religion and the church were subjugated to the imperial will and the laws of the empire, and made subservient to political and worldly purposes.

4. Carnal weapons, which true christianity disavows, were soon employed in defence of the faith, and worship-sanctioned by the government, and for the promulgation of the corrupted christianity espoused by the court. The darkness of paganism was not now to be dispelled as formerly by the light of the gospel, and pagans to be converted by evidence and argument; but the former to be dissipated by imperial decrees, and the latter to be forced from their temples and altars, and brought into the church, by the strong arm of power, by pains and penalties.

5. Church and state being united, the professed ministers of Christ soon became a sanctioned and privileged order, a legalized priesthood. They were no longer left to distinguish

themselves among their brethren by their labors and sufferings, their superior virtues and excellencies; but were completely raised above them, invested with authority over them, and became an ecclesiastical corporation, with various ranks of dignity and power, and with feelings and interests, not only different from, but, in many instances opposed to, those of the people.

6. The persecution of professed christians by each other, was another effect of the union of christianity with the civil power. Independently of this union, it would not have been possible for them to have persecuted one another, had they been so disposed, at least not without being exposed to punishment for their conduct. If not patronized and supported by the state, they might have censured and condemned one another, they might have shown an unchristian spirit, have carried on the war of words, and have bespattered each other with abusive language; but they could not have imprisoned, or banished one another, nor have confiscated each other's property, nor have prevented each other from worshipping God according to their consciences, and professing and teaching what they believed to be true and right. But when the state had committed itself in support of a particular creed and party, it matters not how absurd the creed, nor how small the party, the power of the state would be employed to make all men receive the creed and submit to the party, and the persecution of the dissentients would be the natural consequence. That this was actually the case, history abundantly proves.

7. Whatever corruptions either in doctrine or practice might exist before this union took place, they afterwards widely spread, and rapidly and abundantly increased. This union may be said to have opened the flood gates of corruption, which soon after deluged the church. A worldly spirit diffused itself among the professed ministers of the gospel: pride, ambition, the thirst of power, the love of domination, pomp and show, luxury and dissipation, spread among the professed followers of the meek and lowly Jesus; corrupted by a worldly spirit, and enslaved by their appetites and passions, christianity became

a name and a form; the genuine spirit and vital influence were lost. The ministers became priests, religion was secularized, and the whole system, once so pure and excellent, was corrupted and perverted to mere worldly purposes.

8. It cannot be wondered that when christianity was so greatly corrupted, the ministers, become a legalized priesthood, should have the influence to secure to themselves a compulsory support, and splendid and richly endowed establishments. Become under one view the servants and effective agents, and under another the allies of the civil governors, and ignorance and superstition giving them a powerful hold on the minds of the people, they would find no very great difficulty in securing to themselves a large portion of the good things of this life.

Such have been the effects of the union of christianity with the civil power, the things here glanced at, history fully substantiates, but some of these things require more particular notice.

II. Christianity is not to be defended by carnal weapons, nor propagated by worldly means. That penal laws and statutes, enacted for the defence of christianity, pains and penalties inflicted on unbelievers for their opposition to it, or on those called heretics for the denial of any particular doctrines, and civil disqualifications on account of nonconformity to any particular system or church, are all carnal weapons, and that they have been employed for the defence of what has been called christianity, cannot be denied; yet on careful examination it will be found that it is not pure unadulterated christianity which they have been employed to defend, but that they are the bulwarks of superstition and priestcraft.

1. True and genuine christianity neither needs, nor can it admit of such modes of defence. It furnishes sufficient and effectual means for its own defence, and is invulnerable to all the attacks of its adversaries. During the first three centuries of the christian era, it was most successfully defended by the spiritual weapons which it furnished, against a world of adversaries, without calling the civil power to its aid, or borrowing armor from the arsenal of earthly legislature and government. A defence by carnal weapons is inconsistent with the nature of

genuine christianity it being spiritual and heavenly, and prohibiting the rendering evil for evil or doing evil to any man. Such weapons cannot be used in its defence without injury to its character, and a deterioration of its principles.

2. An Apostle, who was set for the defence of the gospel, (Phil. i. 17.) declares "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God." (2 Cor. x. 4.) not mighty through the acts of the Roman senate, or the decrees of Cæsar in our favor. As christianity disowns the use of carnal weapons, and its first best teachers disavow them, they ought never to be employed in its defence, and when so employed this ought not to be imputed to christianity itself; but to the ignorance of its professed advocates, to their being strangers to its true nature, and genuine principles.

3. Objections to and arguments against christianity are not to be answered and refuted by pains and penalties, these will not remove prejudice, nor convince the unbeliever and the scorner; they will only render prejudice the more inveterate, strengthen the objections and arguments of the unbeliever, irritate the scorner still more, and add keenness to his sarcasms and reproaches. Unbelief can be removed only by evidence and argument; the human mind naturally revolts when it is attempted to be forced; nothing but rational means can possibly produce conviction. Pains, penalties, and civil disqualifications, cannot alter men's religious opinions; they may influence them to disguise them, to act hypocritically; but if they be in error such means can do nothing towards convincing them of their error; they may induce men to profess their assent to what they do not believe, and outwardly to conform to what their hearts disapprove, but such assent and conformity is not religion, it is hypocrisy and sin.

4. Real christianity cannot be propagated by the sword, nor by any merely worldly means. By such means the christian name may be extended, something falsely called christianity may be forced upon mankind, the empire of superstition and priestcraft may be enlarged; but the true knowledge of God as communicated by Jesus Christ, the genuine spirit of the gospel,

and real christian practice will not be found among nations or individuals, converted by the sword, or any other exercise of worldly power, or allured to take the christian name by the prospect of worldly advantage. The supposed sublimity of mystery and pomp of ceremony may dazzle and confound, but cannot make real christians. It is only as men are enlightened by the gospel, imbued with its true spirit and genuine principles, and brought to reduce its precepts to practice, that real christianity is promoted.

III. Christian ministers ought to be supported; but that support should not be compulsory, it should be voluntary on the part of those who contribute to their maintenance.

1. The claims of those who devote themselves to the work of the ministry, and employ their time and talents, knowledge and various attainments, in promoting the improvement and happiness of the people among whom they are called to minister, and the instruction and salvation of mankind, to a decent and comfortable maintenance for themselves and their families, are perfectly reasonable, supported by every principle of justice, and fully authorized by the New Testament. To call faithful, laborious ministers, hireling priests, merely because they are supported by the people to whose service they devote themselves, in compliance with the wishes of those by whom they are supported, and even when without such support it would be impracticable for them so to devote themselves to the work, is manifestly unjust and grossly absurd. It is perfectly reasonable that those who serve others in any way should be remunerated for their services. If the medical and legal adviser be entitled to a reward for their advice, if the teacher of children and youth may justly claim a remuneration for the time and labor he devotes to them, and if the common laborer be worthy of his reward, surely the faithful minister, who devotes his days, and sometimes his nights, to the acquiring and communicating that knowledge which is of the highest importance to mankind, who watches over and labors to promote, not only the religious and moral improvement of the children and youth, but also that of persons of all classes and ages in his congregation,

whose study and aim continually is to promote their real good and happiness in this life, and to prepare them for eternal happiness and glory in the life to come, must be entitled to a remuneration for his services; he must at least have a comfortable maintenance for himself and his family, from those who have called him to the work, and in compliance with whose wishes he continues to labor in it: it is perfectly reasonable that they should contribute to his support and comfort according to their ability and means. On the ground of common justice, were the scriptures silent on the subject, the above claim would be valid and be sufficiently established; but it is fully authorized and enforced by the New Testament. Paul insists pretty fully on the reasonableness and justice of provision being made for the support of christian ministers by those amongst whom they labor, (Cor. ix. 7, 14.) and concludes his remarks on the subject with saying, "The Lord ordained that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel." By which he evidently means, that they should be furnished with the means of living without incumbering themselves with any other employment. The Apostle insists on and illustrates the subject, 2 Tim. ii. 4, 5, 6. In his first Epistle to Timothy chap. vi. 17, 18. He says, let the elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in word and doctrine: For the scripture saith, thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn: And the laborer is worthy of his hire. Other texts might be quoted but these are sufficient. It is evident Paul considered it perfectly reasonable and just, and what the Lord had ordained, that a maintenance should be provided for christian ministers, and deemed this necessary in order to their devoting themselves entirely to the great and important work; by which they sacrifice many worldly advantages which they might gain if they engaged in other pursuits, and devoted the same time and talents to other objects.

Though provision ought to be made for the comfortable support of christian ministers, it ought by no means to be compulsory, but voluntary. It is undeniable, according to all we find rela-

tive to the subject in the New Testament, that all the support the Apostles and first ministers of the word received from the people was given quite voluntarily. As to all pecuniary matters, the christian cause was carried on, and the ministry supported by voluntary contributions: and thus it continued, and must necessarily have continued for several ages; for there was no power in the church, nor any means in the hands of the ministers, to force contributions: and compel the people to give any part of their property towards the support of religion. Nor did Jesus or his Apostles give any direction for the adoption of a different plan when the circumstances should be so far changed as to render it practicable. No authority for the demanding of tithes, what are called church dues, or any payment whatever, towards the support of religion and the christian ministry, can be found in the New Testament. These things all rest upon mere human authority; all attempts to place them on the ground of divine right are totally unfounded and absurd. It was only as the church was united with the state, and the christian ministry became an ecclesiastical corporation, as the kingdom of Christ was converted into a wordly kingdom, and the interference of the civil power in matters of religion was admitted, that these innovations took place gradually; tithes were not paid until ages after the times of the Apostles, at first they appear to have been voluntary gifts; and a long period elapsed before they became exactly what they now are. So far from compulsory payments of any kind towards the support of religion and the christian ministry, being a part of christianity, or necessary for its preservation and success in the world, they are contrary to the nature of true and genuine christianity, and to the liberty wherewith Christ hath made all his disciples free. Every thing in true religion must proceed from the understanding and the heart—must be voluntary. The attempting to force it upon men, and to compel them to pay for it, in any form, is calculated to make it disgusting to them, and to create disaffection and opposition to it. A compulsory support may be necessary to the preservation of christianity as a state religion, and the continuance of a Priesthood among

christians; but christianity and the christian ministry, as they existed in the first ages of the christian era, are very different things; these existed, prospered, and extended far and wide, while entirely dependant on voluntary support: And why should they not do so as well now as they did then, when all the powers of the world were opposed to them? Christian ministers, who possess real talents, who maintain a truly christian character, who are laborious in the work and who make it their study to be useful, to do all the good they can, have been and ever will be supported by those who know the value of their labors.

3. It is natural for those who wish to act the part of priests, to seek repose under the sheltering wing of worldly power, and the secure enjoyment of a compulsory support; to priestcraft the patronage of the state, the honors, emoluments, and power it can bestow, must be gratifying things; but the consistent, faithful and laborious minister of Christ, who wishes to approve himself to God in all things, to promote, both in faith and practice, pure and genuine christianity, who looks for his reward from his father in heaven, in whom he places his whole confidence and hope, and who seeks for his inheritance beyond the grave, will be influenced by very different motives and feelings. He will neither impose himself, nor suffer himself to be imposed, on a congregation without their own choice and consent. He neither seeks the patronage of the state, nor is he hunting after worldly honor, emolument and power. He will not cringe to the powerful, nor flatter the rich and great for the sake of worldly advantage. The edification and happiness of the people among whom he labors, the enlightening, improving and saving his hearers, not the lording over or making a gain of them, is his object. How can such a man fail to be a blessing? What wise and good man would not give him his support?

R. WRIGHT.

(To be concluded in our next.)

MR. EDITOR;

I will thank you, or any of your correspondents, to inform me when Jesus of Nazareth was first worshiped as a God.

Yours, respectfully,

TYRO.

To the Editors of the Christian Reflector.

GENTLEMEN,

Should you consider the following observations worthy a place in your valuable publication, you will much oblige by their insertion

A CONSTANT READER.

THE more wealthy and powerful portion of the community in every age, have seemed to take pleasure in representing their poorer brethren by terms and epithets which convey to the mind a marked inferiority, a state of degradation in intellect, society and morals: even in the present day they are described as the swinish multitude, the lower orders, &c. The former of these epithets I trust is only made use of by the grossly interested, the bigoted and the malicious, by men whose general characteristics are such as to render them the objects of pity and contempt, whose every object is the accumulation of riches, the attainment of unrestrained power, or the gratification of some lawless passion; who (if they could) would stop the progress of improvement in knowledge of every description, who (had they lived in their times) would have crucified the Saviour, imprisoned Galileo, or lighted up the fires of Smithfield. The latter of the above mentioned epithets is employed by many from whom we might expect better things, by many who profess to preach the gospel of Christ, yea even in its original purity, and who read in their Bibles that the rich and the poor meet together, and the Lord is the maker of them all. For what reasons then are our poorer brethren described as the lower orders, what meaning are we to attach to the words. In what sense are the poor and powerless inferior to the wealthy and titled; is it as rational creatures, as members of society, or as christians? By birth all men are equal, the rich and the poor are equally the creatures of the Almighty's power, and the objects of his care, and in the first stage of being equally helpless, powerless and dependant. If we follow them through their successive stages we find that the poor grow in stature and strength as well as the rich, that the blood circulates in their veins, health glows on their cheeks, and their minds open and expand, and that as far as their powers are concerned they are equally capable of attaining that knowledge and those privileges which are so exclusively awarded to the rich.

Are the poor less important as members of society? What is it that constitutes the wealth and prosperity of a nation but labor, and who are they who labor whether in agriculture or commerce but the poor? Generally speaking, the greatest improvements in the arts, sciences and mechanics have been made by the less wealthy portion of mankind, whose only reward has sometimes been reproach, the dungeon, and the stake. Thus is it evident that the very men who ungenerously and ungratefully reproach the poor are absolutely dependant on

them for the luxuries they possess, and even for the means of subsistence.

Are the poor inferior to the wealthy as christians? In this respect the poor seem to stand on the vantage ground: to the poor the gospel was preached, they were chosen by the Almighty as the fittest instruments to spread the greatest blessing through the world which it is our privilege to enjoy. The gospel was originally preached by the poor, by illiterate fishermen and tax-gatherers of Gallilee, by men who possessed not wealth nor power, nor worldly riches of any description whatever, who were despised, betrayed, and murdered by the wealthy and the great, who in their day were stigmatized as turbulent and seditious fellows, and who had they lived in ours, might have been designated the "lower orders."

The rich and the poor are equally the subjects of death, "he gathers into one promiscuous assemblage those whom here no earthly powers could unite into fellowship;" nothing proclaims the equality of man and the vanity of all earthly distinctions more powerfully than the grave. There the rich and the poor repose together, awaiting that day when all who have had existence shall be called to the judgment seat of God, to give an account of the talents with which they had been entrusted; there will be observed no distinction of persons, the question will not be Were you wealthy or poor, but How did you live? then the virtuous poor as well as their more wealthy brethren will be admitted into the regions of the blessed, and the vicious and profane, whether they had been rich or poor, will be visited with that punishment which is so awfully proclaimed in the gospel of Christ. In the future world all distinctions will for ever cease, and all will join in ascribing praise and glory, power and dominion to the Almighty Creator and Governor of all, who is overruling all events for the production of final universal happiness. Thus it is evident that the rich and poor are equally the creatures of the Almighty's power, equally important as members of society, equally qualified to become disciples of Christ, are equally the subjects of death, and are both destined for immortality. What then are we to understand by the epithet lower orders, and what can induce an Unitarian protestant dissenting minister to make use of such a phrase, which at best sounds coarse, harsh and vulgar, and which if the person who uses it does not guard against it, may be understood in an invidious sense? I shall feel glad to receive an answer to the above question (through the medium of your excellent Reflector) by any who may be in the habit of using the epithet I have animadverted upon, for it at present appears to me either to convey no distinct meaning, or one which is highly objectionable, and in either case it ought not to be used. I have ventured thus to address you, because I rejoice to see you are devoted to the cause of genuine christianity, the advocates of civil and religious liberty, and of the rights and

liberties of mankind in general, in the good cause you have undertaken I heartily wish you abundant success; and in anticipation I hail with delight the arrival of that day when the "reign of truth, virtue and happiness shall be universal and everlasting."

Birmingham, Sept. 22nd, 1824.

REFLECTIONS IN A COUNTRY CHURCH YARD.

"I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them."—

Rev. xiv. 13.

THE evening was serene and calm, and I was led to pursue my walk, unexpectedly I found myself entering the church yard. The "ivy mantled" tower was gilded by the last rays of the departing sun; and not a sound was heard, except what proceeded from some persons in a boat at the pier, and they shortly rowed away. All nature seemed hushed in peace, and impressed with a religious awe; I seated myself on a tomb-stone and began to reflect on the scene around.

Beneath my feet was a stone nearly covered by the creeping grass, the inscription upon it was rendered almost illegible with age. Here lieth one (thought I) who perhaps like myself, was young and looked for future years, but who has been long forgotten, mouldering in the dust. And soon must this be the case with me, for the feet which have brought me to this place must, ere long, lie motionless in the narrow cell, the eyes which now gaze on things around shall be closed in the sleep of death, this earthly tabernacle will be altogether destroyed and committed to its parent earth!

Filled with these reflections, I involuntarily arose and wandered amid the mouldering heaps. Here and there a stone appeared which served as a memorial of those who were laid beneath. One more conspicuous than the rest invited my attention. It told of one who had lived, enjoyed health, and died "after an illness of a few hours;" affording a striking example of the truth of that saying, "In the midst of life we are in death." How fully (I mentally ejaculated as I cast a glance on the grave before me) how fully dost thou teach to those whose hopes are built on future years, and who pride themselves on the little strength they now possess; the folly of their pride, and the emptiness of their boast!

Passing further on, beneath a spreading yew, I observed a tomb apparently newly erected, and which, as the inscription stated, was raised to the memory of the late minister of the

place. Cut off in the prime of life, his master had called him to his eternal reward. And here, (thought I) whatever may have been thy peculiar sentiments in religion, all distinctions and party divisions cease. Why then should christian brethren fall out by the way? The opinions of men may be widely opposed to each other on earth, and they may separate in consequence: nay, they may even rage against and persecute each other, but the Father of all hath appointed them to meet in the chamber of death, "the house appointed for all living."

On a little rising ground was a solitary stone recording the wreck of a vessel near the place, when a greater part of the crew perished and were buried there. The long grass grew over their remains in rank luxuriance, as if to shew the nothingness of man. As I beheld the place, I could not forbear exclaiming, "O death, to what dost thou reduce us! How many of thy victims are here, returning 'earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust!'" How suddenly were they summoned into an awful eternity, with all their imperfections on their heads! A voice seemed to whisper to my soul, "Child of the dust, remember thine own mortality, and prepare to meet thy God!"

The shades of night were now fast setting in, and I began to think of retracing my steps towards home. Yet ere I quitted the silent spot, I could not avoid once more casting a glance around. Numerous were the little grassy hillocks which at this time caught my eye, as the only remaining marks of those who had lived and died. The infant, the youth, the aged, the rich, the poor, all lay together in silent confusion, sleeping on the lap of their parent earth. They had entered that gloomy house which awaits every weary traveler, "where the wicked cease from troubling and all enjoy an undisturbed repose." An awful stillness reigned around, as if to tell that there was "neither work nor device in the peaceful grave."

As I beheld the little remains of those who once were, I involuntarily exclaimed, "O death," king of terrors, what a potent enemy art thou! To thee it seems all are subject, and sooner or later must submit to thine awful summons. No prayers, no riches, can save from thy poisoned shaft, no strength protect from thy fearful power. At thy dread mandate we leave whatever we possess on earth, our enjoyments, our connections, our friends, our all! We are consigned to the insatiable jaws of the devouring grave, and nought remains but—"here we lie."

But shalt thou reign over mankind for ever? Is thy power never to be destroyed? Art thou always to remain the invincible conqueror of the human race? Oh, no! Jesus the Son of God hath explored thy dark dominions; he hath despoiled thee of thy venomous sting; he hath cut short thy dreaded power. Soon, soon will the time arrive when thou shalt be

utterly destroyed and known no more. The record of revelation declares that the awful morn will soon arrive when the archangel's trump will sound, and "all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man and come forth," and "there shall be no more death, for mortality shall be swallowed up in life." "This corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality" O death! where will then be thy sting? O grave! where will then be thy victory?

And, O, what a morning will that be, when those who are now sleeping here, as well as all of every kindred, clime and tongue, shall burst the fetters of their graves and rise to meet their descending Lord! "It is appointed unto all men once to die, but after death the judgment." "God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." For a moment let me shut out the world and meditate on the awful scene.

The trumpet's loud and dreadful blast awakes the sleeping dead; the earth begins to reel, the graves to heave, and all arise. Preceded by ten thousand saints and angels the "Lord from heaven" descends. Before his presence dread all nature quakes, and pealing thunders roll. Some now would fain shrink back into their earthly bed; but, ah! the narrow tenement they so lately left has disappeared. What horror seems to sit upon their brow; what anguish and despair to heave their breasts! Again the trumpet's thrilling sound is heard; the Judge of quick and dead appears on his great white throne, and all are called to stand before him. Many whom the world has reproached and persecuted are now owned as faithful and deserving; whilst on the other hand, many whom the world has caressed and honored are set aside. All appear in their true colors, just as they were left at death, and all are judged in righteousness. Each receives his just reward. The righteous hear the welcome sentence, "come ye blessed," and pass on the right hand of the Judge to their eternal reward. The wicked hear pronounced upon them, "depart ye cursed," and are driven to the left hand, where misery—but here my trembling soul could no more. "Father of heaven! I ejaculated, spare, oh, spare thy worm in mercy, and ere he is summoned to the shades of night prepare him to meet thee in the awful day!" I now quitted the spot, and soon found myself in the lane leading towards home.

How different, thought I, as I returned, how different are the characters of the righteous and the wicked, in life and death, as well as in the day of judgment! The former is an enviable character. Fearing God, he makes it his whole study and delight to serve him. At peace with all the world, he has peace

within, and diffuses peace to all around. He prospers in his worldly circumstances, for he is industrious and steady. His children are brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and they repay his care. His integrity is known, and he is respected and beloved by all. View him in the hour of death; he looks upon his past life with complacency and joy, and beholds the future with gladness and hope. Trusting in his God, for him death has no fears, no sting; he knows it is that for which he was born; and though the dark valley appears near in view, yet he can smile as life's last hour approaches and say, "I will fear no evil. I have fought a good fight, my course is finished. Thanks be to God, who giveth the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." In short, he lives in credit, and leaves the world in happiness and peace.

Far otherwise is it with the wicked man: "He is like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up dirt and mire" He forsakes his God; is destitute of all that is truly good, and is at perpetual variance with all around him. By his disorderly course of life, he destroys his constitution, beggars his children, and ruins his circumstances. He is a stranger to integrity, and is esteemed by none. At length he comes to die; but instead of happiness, he is surrounded with misery. He looks back on his past life with horror, and to the future with despair. He sees his Maker, but he knows he has not served him; he sees the grave, but he knows that is not to be the extinction of his being. Covered with unhappiness and sorrow, he dies: "he giveth up the ghost and where is he?" His friends (if he has any) consign him to the grave, where he awaits the trumpet's dreaded sound! Who would not, contemplating the different ends of these men, exclaim, "let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!"

Dear christian reader, whoever thou mayest be that seest these lines, written in weakness, thou art one of the above characters. O may it prove that of the former! Remember, that *that* will soon come upon thee which will one day come upon all, and remember also the importance of being prepared for it. Think, O think on thy dying hour. It is then thou wilt stand on the verge of eternity, and see things as they really are. The state unknown will then present itself to thy view, the silver cord will be loosed, the wheel broken at the cistern, the pitcher at the fountain will be destroyed, and thou wilt have to pass alone through the dark valley. The light of this world will gradually recede from before thy closing eyes, till, at length upon thee it shuts for ever!—and, ah! of what importance it is that those, thy last expiring moments should be rendered happy; that thou shouldst gain the victory over thy last enemy; that the dark vale thou hast to tread be illuminated by mild religion's lamp, that thou mayest have cause to rejoice

in the hope of eternal glory! But, know this;—the wicked and depraved are strangers to these happy feelings; to the righteous alone they truly belong.

Suffer the word of exhortation from thy fellow mortal; flee from the wrath to come! Say not that thou art healthy and strong, and that it is time enough to be serious yet: neither say it will be time enough in a dying hour. Enough wilt thou then have to do with the pains of the body, without the pain of reflecting upon a misspent life. How awful will it be for thee then to see thy time all spent, and nothing laid up for eternity! How wretched thy condition, if in thy conflict with thy last enemy thou hast to learn the use of thine arms! O mayest thou be led to prepare for the conflict! May the victory then be thine! Mayest thou pass triumphantly through the dark dominions of the king of terrors, till at length thou art admitted to join "the general assembly of the church of the first born, whose names are written in the book of life!"

Cornwall.

S. M.

The Caterer,

No. XIX.

"Plinius major dicere solebat, nullum esse librum tam malum, ut non aliquà parte posset prodesse."

The following Petition (says the New York Advertiser) from Peter Harris, one of the Catawba tribe of Indians, was presented lately in the South Carolina Legislature.

"To the Council of South Carolina,"

"I am one of the lingering embers of an almost extinguished race; our graves will soon be our habitations. I am one of the few stalks that remain in the field when the tempest of the Revolution is past. I fought against the British for your sake; the British have disappeared and you are free; yet from me the British took nothing, nor have I gained any thing by their defeat. I pursue the deer for my subsistence; the deer is disappearing and I must starve; God ordained me for the forest, and my habitation is the shade: but the strength of my arm decays, and my feet fail in the chase. The hand which fought for your liberty is now open for your relief. In my youth I bled in battle that you might be independent; let not my heart bleed for the want of your commiseration."

An enlightened Congregation.

Proviso in the Charter of Incorporation of the United High German Evangelical Reformed Congregation of the Township

of the Northern Liberties in the county of Philadelphia, in the United States of America.

Sect. 10. No other language than the High German language shall be preached in any Church, School House, or Burial Ground, nor shall any Organ or Musical Instrument be used in divine service.

Sect. 11. No person shall be held eligible to hold the office of Preacher who shall have studied Divinity as a profession, or who shall have been a student at any University, or belonged to any Synod.

Religious Intelligence.

The Rev. Robert Cree, of Preston, commenced a Course of Lectures on Sunday Evening, Oct. 17th. on the Evidences of Christianity; to be continued on succeeding, Sunday Evenings. The following are the heads:—

1. Introductory Lecture—2. The same continued—3. Antecedent Probability of a divine Revelation—4. The Divinity of the Christian Religion proved from the evidence of Testimony—5. Evidence of Miracles—6. The same subject continued—7. Evidence from Prophecy—8. Internal evidence—9. The same subject continued—10. Collateral Evidences of the Divinity of the Christian Religion.

A course of Lectures on the Introduction of Christianity, and its progress during the ministry of the Apostles, and to the time of Constantine, is now delivering in the Unitarian Meeting House, Hunter Street, Liverpool, on Sunday Evenings. By F. B. Wright.

The Rev. James Hawkes is delivering a course of Lectures on the Doctrines of Christianity, on Sunday Evenings, in the Unitarian Chapel, Nantwich.

Dinner given to the Rev. John Grundy at Manchester, on August the 12th, 1824.

FURTHER PARTICULARS.

The chairman, Mr. Richard Potter, preparatory to the presentation of the Service of Plate to Mr. Grundy, rose and said, Before entering on the more immediate object of the meeting, he would propose a sentiment to them, which, if favorably received, would shew, that though on religious opinions they differed from so large a portion of the community, yet towards all they entertained the kindest feelings, it was,

"Our brethren of all religious denominations"—*This sentiment was received with great applause.*

In proposing the next toast the chairman said, he believed the vice president, Mr. Naylor, had the honor and happiness of being personally known to the two illustrious characters, to whose memory he hoped the company would pay due respect, they were men who, when living, conferred important benefits on mankind, and who have left behind them a fame which will endure for ages.

"The memory of Priestley and Lindsey, and may their noble and generous sacrifices in the cause of truth never be forgotten."

The vice president gave some very interesting details respecting those two gentlemen, nothing, he said, could exceed their amiable manners in private life, and their public actions and writings were too well known to require his feeble voice.

"The Rev. Dr. Kirkland, president of the University of Cambridge, in America, the able and distinguished advocate of Unitarianism."

The American Vice Consul, S. R. Brooks, Esq., rose and said,—“That it gave him great pleasure to be present on an occasion so interesting as this, and to associate with gentlemen professing such liberal and enlightened opinions—he begged to thank the company for the honor they had done his countryman, whom, he assured the meeting, was every way worthy of their regard.”

He (Mr. Brooks) took this opportunity of informing the meeting, that Unitarianism was making rapid progress in America, (*cheers*) indeed, the chapels were crowded to excess, and it was almost impossible to obtain a seat in them, (*loud applause*) not long ago congress appointed a Unitarian minister to be their chaplain, and he doubted not but in a few years the cause would receive a great acquisition.”

This speech created a striking sensation amongst the company, and was received with general approbation.

Mr. Potter in proposing the next toast spoke to the following effect:—Mr. vice president and gentlemen, “Interested and gratified, as I am sure every person must have been, who heard the farewell sermon which Mr. Grundy delivered last Sunday morning in Cross Street chapel, and in no part of it was I more so than when he spoke of the late Rev. John Seddon, formerly one of the ministers of that place. Perhaps I am not going too far, in conjecturing that his example might have had some influence in inducing Mr. Grundy to adopt the course he did, and which has this day secured to him so honorable a testimony of your esteem and approbation; however, be that as it may, Mr. Seddon was the first minister on the records of that chapel who publicly taught and defended Unitarian doctrines, and at a time too when severe penalties were in force and acted upon for, a few years before his appointment, Mr. Ellwall was prosecuted for publishing doctrines denying the trinity, in a book entitled, “A true Testimony for God and his Sacred Law,” and suffered imprisonment. Mr. Seddon was besides a most amiable and good man, and though his remains lie in comparative obscurity in our chapel, still his exertions and virtues are operating, for, as a modern poet says:—

“Mute splendor may proclaim where good men rest,
When life's precarious, anxious term is o'er;
But virtuous actions still will warm some breast,
When proud sepulchral monuments are no more.”

I therefore give you,

"To the memory of the Rev. John Seddon, the intrepid supporter of christian truth in difficult times."

The Rev. J. Grundy rose and gave several interesting details of this amiable man, whose devotion to the cause of truth brought on a premature death, for his constitution was but a delicate one, but his mind rose superior to it, and he often preached when laboring under severe indisposition, and, a short time before his dissolution, walked to Chowbent and back on a Sunday, a distance of twenty-four miles, and preached twice : from the effects of so great an exertion he never recovered.

"May superstition, prejudice and bigotry, give way to inquiry, candor and liberality."

Before the chairman gave this sentiment, he said, a circumstance took place on the 24th of last month, (July) which, he thought, would convince the meeting it was not uncalled for, certainly not as respects the magistrates of Leicestershire, but it would be best understood by reading the following letter.

To the Editor of the Leicester Chronicle.

SIR,

I request the insertion in your paper, of the following brief statement of facts, which have taken place recently, from which it will appear that I am the victim of ecclesiastical prejudice and bigotry. I am, probably, well known as the person in whose name the question has been lately agitated in this town concerning the legal claims of the clergy to Easter Offerings. This circumstance will throw light upon my narrative. I was lately desirous of taking an apprentice, as a shoemaker, a youth named Alfred Witney, with the approbation of the youth's father, and the parish officers of Thurnby, by whom this boy was to be put out. In pursuance of this, I applied to the minister and parish officers for a character, and obtained the signatures of the curate, overseer, and several respectable neighbours. The churchwardens refused to sign, alleging several reasons which I thought frivolous; one was, that I did not attend the church, whereas not one fifth part of the parishoners of St. Nicholas do belong to the established church. Before the Rev. Mr. Higgs (curate to the Rev. Mr. Davis) signed the recommendation, the following dialogue took place as nearly as I can recollect.

Curate. Are you the person who stood the contest respecting Easter Offerings with your vicar, Mr. Davis.

Wm. Lilley. Yes; and I suspect that might be one reason why the churchwardens would not sign the certificate of my character.

Curate. The Rev. Mr. Davis did not prosecute you personally, but only to prove his right; he considered you were backed by a party, who would draw you into a snare and then leave you.

W. L. No, sir. I was backed by no party. I acted from the impulse of my own conscience, and the public came forward to assist me.

Curate. Do you intend to instil your principles into the lad, if you have him?

W. L. What principles?

Curate. No reply.

W. L. I don't wish to instil any evil principles, or evil mor als into the lad.

Curate. But you are an enemy to the church.

W. L. Is not this a free country? Has not every man a claim to liberty of conscience?

Curate. But as you are an enemy to the church, you must be an enemy

to the state; they are so united, that if the church falls, the state must. You should abide by the laws of your country.

W. L. I do not know that I have ever violated them.

The curate then signed; but after this act of grace, he suddenly found himself upon the stool of repentance, for he went the next day to the attorney of the Thurnby overseers, to endeavour to get his name erased. On the next market day, (last Saturday,) the parties attended before the justices at the hotel, for the purpose of having the lad indentured. The following persons were present—the Rev. Mr. Tyson, Col. Hulse, C. L. Smith, Esq. Rev. Mr. Burnaby, Mr. B. Burnaby, the county clerk and one more. Having entered the room, the county clerk called for the character, and said to me, with a sneer, is not your name Silly? then, looking at the paper, said, oh, no; I see it is Lilley. The Rev. Mr. Tyson asked the guardian of Thurnby, Mr. Wait, what religion he was of, whether he was of the established church? He replied, he was a Dissenter. The Rev. Mr. Tyson asked him, of what denomination? He replied, he did not think he was obliged to tell them; that was his own concern. I was asked of what religion I was; I replied a Unitarian. The lad's father was asked the same question; he replied, a Unitarian. Then the Rev. Mr. Tyson, turning to his brother magistrates, said I object to binding the boy to a Unitarian, for we all know what their principles are; and he told the overseers of Thurnby, they ought not to apply to such people, but to members of the established church only.* The overseers replied that they did not suppose they had any right to enquire into religious opinions on such occasions. The father of the boy then wished to address a few words to the magistrates, but they ordered him to desist and retire. The above is a plain statement of facts, which I submit to the observation of a liberal and enlightened public.

I am yours, &c.

Leicester, July 23th, 1824. *W. LILLEY.*

The president next addressed the meeting to the following effect:—It has frequently been said by persons ignorant of the doctrines of our faith, or probably by those who wished to misrepresent them, that our religion was only calculated for the *rich*, and that ourselves were not anxious to propagate it amongst the *poor*; I firmly believe this was always without foundation, but the efforts now making, and I rejoice to add successfully making, to spread pure and unadulterated christianity amongst the working class, will, I trust, very soon give a practical contradiction to this remark.

We have the most animating inducement to persevere in this good work, in that beautiful passage wherein Jesus announced the establishment, and characterized the principles of christianity, by declaring, "The blind receive their sight, the lame walk,

* This expression of the Rev. Mr. Tyson, reminds us of a circumstance which happened during the reign of the profligate Charles II. One Sunday morning a garden was robbed of the greater part of the cabbages which grew in it. The thief was apprehended, and proved to be a loyal orthodox churchman, and the defence set up by his counsel, was, that the prosecutor was a Dissenter; this he supposed would be quite sufficient to exculpate his client; but a judge even of that day was found honest enough to ask, if the Dissenters could not eat their own cabbages? In these days of greater light and liberality, we should not have expected to find a magistrate and that magistrate having taken holy orders under the pretended influence of the Holy Ghost, so bigoted as to suppose a Unitarian could not instruct a boy to make *sound shoes*, and even to mend an orthodox parson's *sole*. *Edits.*

the lepers are cleansed, the dead are raised up," and as the consummation of all, "the poor have the gospel preached to them." (*loud cheers*) In consistency therefore with the purposes of primitive christianity, I beg to propose,

"The Rev. Wm. Duffield, and may the erection of the chapel in Salford be a means of spreading Unitarian principles amongst the poor."

This sentiment was very favorably received, and Mr. Frederick Boardman rose to return thanks for Mr. Duffield, who was prevented attending by indisposition; he said he hoped the cause of Unitarianism would be greatly promoted in this populous and important town by the building of the chapel in Salford, and he was sure the working people would gladly receive our doctrines if properly explained to them.

The chairman said he was happy to see amongst them a young gentleman, Mr. Ryland, one of the divinity students at York; those young men have formed what are called college missions, and go out on the sabbath to preach in the towns and villages round York, and have met with great success and encouragement; at one place, Wellborne, a regular congregation is formed and a chapel about being built. Such an employment of their time was truly creditable to them, and will be, like the quality of mercy, "blessing him that gives; and him that takes."

"Mr. Ryland and the Divinity Students at York"

Mr. Ryland begged to assure the meeting how highly gratified he was at this mark of their regard, and was also sure his fellow students would be equally so; he was happy so respectable an assembly had expressed their approbation of the conduct pursued by the students at York, and he was sure it would be a means of stimulating them to still further exertions and amply reward them for what they had done. He (Mr. Ryland) was happy to say, that the success that had attended that scheme, had exceeded the most sanguine expectations, and it was delightful to see how readily and gladly the truths of the gospel were received, (*cheers*)

The President next gave,

"To the most sacred of all rights, liberty of conscience."

He would tell the meeting his reason for so doing.—They would probably recollect a letter which lately appeared before the public, by a Mr. Hamilton, to the secretary of state, in which he says, a short time before he left Bogoto, he was present at a large dinner party there, at which a dignitary of the church, a Roman Catholic of considerable influence, gave the above sentiment as a toast; he, the chairman, was sure Englishmen would re-echo back the joyful sound across the Atlantic, and hail the rising tolerant spirit on matters of religion, by which the new governments in South America were influenced.

Original Poetry.

God's Majesty and Dominion.

God in the whirlwind bath his way,
He rides majestic in the storm,
The raging tempests him obey,
Clouds his aerial chariot form.
Darkness he forms, creates the light,
His ways are perfect, just and right.

When mighty deeps like mountains rise,
When furious billows foam and roar,
The tempest drowns the sailors' cries,
And desolation spreads the shore,
O'er the dread scene the Lord presides,
The raging elements he guides.

When the loud thunder rends the sky,
When the red lightning blazes round,
The hail pours clattering from on high,
And mortals tremble at the sound,
Thunder and fire and hail fulfil
The righteous dictates of his will.

When the volcanic mountains shake,
And burning rocks are round them hurl'd,
When fiery torrents from them break,
And dire convulsions shake the world,
The trembling earth, and burning flood,
Confess the mighty hand of God.

He sits in majesty on high,
And rules in heaven and earth and sea,
He spreads his wonders o'er the sky,
His sovereign voice all worlds obey:
Clouds are the dust where he hath trod,
The heaven of heavens his fix'd abode.

R. W.

The Countryman and the Orthodox Divine.

A Countryman of parts, less learning,
Who dreamt of nothing but discerning
What the true meaning of hard words and
phrases,

And what the establish'd creed of modern
days is,

Felt much inclined to know, if orthodoxy
Meant that Divines should only think by
proxy.

Big with the importance of the question,
He reach'd the parson's door,
Regardless of the hour,
And with one thund'ring rap
Depriv'd him of his nap;
For napping after dinner helps digestion.
The priest of such a circumstance ne'er
dreaming,

Whose head with sundry articles was teem-
ing,

Of tithes in kind,
Just to his mind,
Of Easter dues,
And goodly news
Which treated of the loaves and fishes,
October brown, and sav'ry dishes,
Was not so ruffled as might be expected,
But to the Countryman these words directed.
"Tho' you've disturb'd me with a single
knock,

Which might the efforts of a Sampson
mock,

And feelings finer than my own might shock,
I'll not rebuke you, since you wish to know
What so concerns our welfare here below.
'Tis orthodox, then, that we believe,
What Athanasius teaches in his creed,
That all the world is curs'd, because poor
Eve

Committed one unpardon'd, wicked deed.
That three are one too, and that one is three;
We must believe tho' sanction'd by no rule;
'Tis in itself a sacred mystery,
But disregarded by the modern school.
Incomprehensible 'tis truly nam'd,
But our preferment rests upon its base:
Our ancestors for worldly riches form'd,
Deem'd reason carnal, self delusion, grace.
To them we must subscribe, or we forego
The sinecures which soon or late await us;
Whether we're thinking for ourselves, or no,
Our mitre'd heads will never understate us,
Wou'd you be sav'd you must think as thus
taught,

And have your head with Athanasius cram-
m'd,

If you do not, by heresy you're caught,

And will most surely be for ever d-d."

The Countryman, with eyes and hands up-
lifted,

Astonished at the doctrine which he heard,
Aptly compar'd it to the chaff that's sifted
From the pure grain, 'twas plainly so absurd
And turning round, said, "Keep your ortho-
doxy

Reason shall guide me, I'll not think by
proxy,

Reason's a gift bestow'd by bounteous hea-
ven,

And for the best of purposes was giv'n,"

And never waiting for the priest's reply,
Abruptly left him, with a cool "Good by."

M.

Delamere, May 29th, 1824.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We wish our readers to notice a letter which will be found in our *Religious Intelligence*. We can now only say, that the conduct of the magistrates attracted the attention of several spirited individuals who were determined to bring the matter into the Court of King's Bench; this has been prevented by the clerk to the Loughbro' magistrates (in the same county) informing LILLEY that if the parties applied there, no obstruction would be offered—the parties applied accordingly, no questions were asked, and the boy's indentures were signed—and the opposing parties have thus been saved from at least a disgraceful exposure in a public court. If parson-magistrates may proceed thus far with impunity, we shall see them next aping the conduct of the tyrant Louis XIV., and publish orders, that no Unitarian shall buy or sell, or occupy any trade or business in any corporate town, borough, or city—that these privileges shall alone belong to those who erect the sign of the triangle over their shops and their houses; and who hold themselves ready on all occasions to bow down to the image which worldly power has set up. Several communications, which were prepared for press, are omitted for want of room.

F. B. Wright, Printer.

The Christian Reflector,

AND THEOLOGICAL INQUIRER.

"I speak as unto wise men ; judge ye what I say." PAUL.

No. 64. LIVERPOOL, DECEMBER 1st, 1824. Price 4½d

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY DEFENDED, AND PRIEST-CRAFT EXPLODED.

(Concluded from page 251.)

Sect. 11.—Miscellaneous observations on priestcraft.—Objects of priestcraft—Concluding remarks.

THE plan of this Essay, and the limits which I have thought proper to set to it have prevented my enlarging much on any part of the subject; I have insisted most on those parts of it which seem most applicable to the present times, and likely to be useful in the present state of things. As this will be the last section, I must compress into it a variety of remarks which will render it rather miscellaneous. If enough be said on the whole, to bring the subject so far before the reader as to fix his attention to it, and to lead him to distinguish between the christian ministry and priestcraft, and to cherish and promote the former, while he sets his face against and discountenances the latter, my end in writing will be answered.

A number of the minor arts of priestcraft must pass unnoticed; but it may be proper to observe, that, though never averse to force and violence, when they can be resorted to with a prospect of success, when this appears impracticable, when mankind cannot be coerced into subjection to priestly domination, and compelled by the awe which assumed authority inspires, and by mere terror, to prostrate their understandings to the dictates of their ghostly masters, and to submit to have their consciences put in chains; but show a disposition to withstand those who would tyrannize over their faith, and act the part of conscience gaolers; then fraud will be employed to effect the nefarious purposes of priestcraft; it will cringe and fawn, and practise every kind of deception: and it is by fraud

chiefly that its purposes have been effected, and that it hath maintained and extended its influence and dominion. It is essential to this craft to disguise every thing, to make the ostensible what is far from being the real object. Even when exercising the most hateful tyranny, and acting in the most unchristian and brutal manner, and carrying on the most cruel persecutions, the professed object of the priests was the glory of God, whom they were dishonoring, the peace of the church, which they were destroying, and the good of souls, when they were persecuting even to death and inflicting the most dreadful tortures. Though such horrible practices are now prevented, and the wolves of priestcraft are chained, by the more liberal spirit of the times, and by good and wholesome laws, the minions of priestcraft will still show their teeth and growl, and sometimes make it evident that they like not the salutary restraint imposed upon them; and they will still carry on a species of persecution against those whom they deem heterodox, and stigmatize with the name of heretics. Though no fires are now lighted like those in a large town in the centre of England, to destroy the property of Unitarians, toward the close of the last century, is it not persecution to blast the character, destroy the reputation, and prevent the usefulness, in the view of the multitude, of men whose whole aim is to enlighten and improve mankind, and whose only crime is their zeal to promote what they believe to be divine truth; by grossly misrepresenting their opinions, motives and aims, and using all possible means to have it believed that they are dangerous persons, enemies to God and Christ, and the doctrines they maintain damnable? As character, is of the highest value, especially to public teachers, as usefulness is the great end for which a good man would wish to live, and as a considerable part of the comfort and enjoyment of life depends on society, unjustly to destroy the reputation, prevent the usefulness, and cut off, as far as practicable, from the civilities and charities of life, and deprive of the pleasurable intercourses of society, those whose opinions are deemed heterodox, is no slight degree of persecution: and this is sometimes done, and with a degree of success in some instances, by those

who call themselves orthodox and evangelical. Is not the conduct of such men to be reckoned among the vile and fraudulent practices of priestcraft? Do they not inflict a species of persecution, more difficult to endure, in some instances, than what all the world would allow to be persecution? Priests will affect great love to your souls, and a deep concern for your salvation, in order to induce you to give up your souls to their care, and the affairs of your salvation to their management, to let them think for you, and lead you hoodwinked and conscience bound, in the fetters of their unintelligible creeds, enslaved by their dogmas, to grace their triumphs and subserve their corrupt interests. They will compliment and flatter, soothe and pity, pretend great fear and anxiety lest you should be led into error; and they will alarm and terrify, censure and threaten; as may best suit their purpose of securing their own influence and power, honor and emolument. They know were men to think freely and fearlessly for themselves, to hear and read what is advanced on both sides, respecting subjects of controversy among christians, and to converse freely with men of sense and piety of different parties, so as to be brought to an impartial and candid view of things, and to judge and decide for themselves, they might break their fetters, shake off their yoke, and consequently their influence and domination would cease: hence they do all they can to prevent what they so much dread, what would be so fatal to their consequence and power.

The real ministers of Christ will not walk in craftiness, they will not handle the word of God deceitfully, nor resort to any of the disingenuous arts which mark the character of priestcraft: but by a plain and faithful statement of the truth, by open and fair dealing with all men, by a holy and heavenly temper, by a liberal and benevolent spirit, by a truly christian conversation, by a simple and ingenuous behavior, and by a conversation which adorns the gospel, they will commend themselves to every man's conscience as in the sight of God. They may be grossly misrepresented; but they will neither misrepresent other men, nor use any unfair means to diminish their influence in society. They will neither withhold the charities of life, nor do any thing

to hinder the usefulness or interrupt the social enjoyment of those whose opinions they think erroneous. Though they feel an ardent love to the souls of men, and a deep concern for their salvation, they will not boast of this, much less will they employ the profession of it for sinister purposes. They will not dare to compliment and flatter, though they will be courteous to all men, and pay all due respect to others. They will labor to soothe and comfort the afflicted and distressed; but will not degrade themselves by religious cant and affectation. They will neither try to alarm and intimidate, nor to cajole men out of the use of their reason in religion, or from the exercise of individual judgment on every subject. They will show their love to the souls of men, and concern for their salvation, by doing all in their power to enlighten and improve them.

It may be useful to give a summary view of the objects of priestcraft. 1. The raising themselves above their brethren, as a distinct and privileged order with peculiar rights, prerogatives and powers, contrary to the express doctrine of our Lord, has ever been the object of priests: "One is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren." "Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles, exercise lordship over them, and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: and whosoever of you will be chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." How muchsoever priests may have differed in other respects, the above may be regarded as characteristic of them all, and as distinguishing them from the true and consistent ministers of Christ. 2. Proceeding upon the above principle, the attainment of consequence among men, the honor which cometh from them, and their homage and adulation, has been an object of priestcraft. Hence the titles of rank and dignity which priests have assumed, the distinctive and showy dresses, and the outward pomp of the priesthood, the gaudy and imposing ceremonies and superstitious formalities they have adopted, and the awful garb of mystery in which they

have enveloped religion, and whatever relates to their "sacred order." These things seem designed to fill the multitude with awe and admiration, and to lead them to reverence the priests, and do homage to them, as men of a superior order. None of these things existed in the first and best times of christianity; but are evidently to be reckoned among its corruptions. Jesus declared, that he received not honor from men: he used no means to dazzle and excite admiration; he even forbade the publishing of miracles which were calculated to increase his fame and procure him the homage of the people. He took not to himself the honor of his mighty works, but ascribed it all to God his Father: and certainly affected no outward pomp, nor any thing indicative of worldly greatness, to produce awe, and excite homage to himself. His faithful and consistent ministers will imitate him; they will not aim at their own consequence, nor seek honor from men, nor hunt after the praise and adulation of men. 3. The love of power is common among men; but Jesus prohibited it among his disciples. The attainment of power and dominion has ever been an object of priestcraft; not merely of power as to the things of this life, but as to the life to come. Priests have extended their assumed power beyond this world, even to men after they are dead, to procure their release from purgatorial pains, and changing their condition in a future life. Those who have not extended their priestly power so far, have assumed and exercised most unwarrantable and odious authority; such authority as the apostles, though divinely commissioned messengers, utterly disavowed; authority over the faith and consciences and religious practice of christians: and some who in words renounce, do in fact exercise this hateful and antichristian power. There cannot be a clearer mark of priestcraft than the exercise of dominion in religion, authority over the faith and consciences of others: it is real popery, and one of the worst parts of popery. No real minister of Christ will assume any such power. 4. Worldly emolument has been another object of priestcraft; and this object priests, in different parts of what is called the christian world, have long attained and been in possession of, in connection with those before mentioned. That they have secured to themselves a large portion

of the good things of this world is a fact too notorious, and undeniable, to need any proof. That this should have been done without the long continued exercise of no small degree of craft is not to be credited, and how and by what measures this point was effected, history sufficiently shows. Mankind could not have been induced to have given so considerable a part of their property to support a priesthood, and to carry on the corrupted system of christianity which has all along been under the management of priests, had they not been so far imposed on and deceived, as to think it was some way or other their interest, either in this world or the next, to do it. Though the ministers of Christ cannot devote themselves to that office and work, unless they be supported, those who are worthy of the name, are not influenced by worldly motives, worldly emolument is not their object; having those things which are needful, they will not seek after worldly aggrandizement, nor look for their reward in earthly things. They are influenced by far higher motives, and have better and nobler objects in view, and show by their conduct that they are ministers of him whose kingdom is not of this world. 5. In brief the objects of priestcraft are altogether worldly. Priests act upon worldly principles, are worldly minded, and pursue worldly objects; though they may profess what is very different; yet as the tree is to be known by its fruit, while they adopt worldly maxims and show, by their spirit and conduct, that they are worldly, it is not inconsistent with candor and charity to say, "They are of the world, and speak of the world, and therefore the world heareth them." The pursuit of popularity, by a concealment of what is believed to be truth, or by any way disguising the sentiments really entertained, by a compliance with the prejudices, a seeming assent to the opinions, and a falling in with the maxims and habits, which happen to prevail, is priestcraft and hypocrisy. When christian teachers so act they show themselves unworthy of the name they bear, and their conduct ought to receive marked disapprobation and censure. When ministers show themselves to be respecters of persons, when they wink at the follies and crimes of the rich, powerful and great, and neglect the poor, and treat their failings and defects

with the utmost severity, they show themselves to be influenced by priestcraft. The real ministers of Christ, will endeavor to act with impartiality towards all men: they will not desire popularity at the expence of truth, and of christian consistency. If the truth as it is in Jesus be unpopular, they will wish to share in its unpopularity: they will value popularity only as it furnishes the means of promoting truth and righteousness, and of doing good to mankind. Lastly,

What a contrast appears between the character, conduct and circumstance of the first teachers of christianity, Jesus and his apostles, and their pretended successors, the christian priesthood! Jesus said he had not where to lay his head, and was supported by the voluntary contributions of his friends. Peter said, "Silver and gold have I none." The apostles were poor and despised and esteemed as the offscouring of all things. They had neither wealth nor power, but spent their lives in unwearied labors and patient sufferings. They were exposed continually to reproaches and persecutions, laboring incessantly to diffuse the knowledge of the gospel and to plant christianity every where; claiming no higher title than that of messengers of Jesus Christ, and brethren and fellow servants among the christians. They claimed neither worldly dignity, nor power, nor sought honor nor aggrandizement among men. At last most, if not all of them, sealed the truth which they preached with their blood. Their pretended successors the christian priesthood, have raised themselves to worldly power and honor, aggrandized themselves and become lords over God's heritage, and are as unlike the first ministers of the word as any class of men can well be. The true and faithful ministers of Christ, will take the first teachers for their example, be content to labor and suffer so far as the cause of truth and righteousness may require, looking for their reward at the coming of the great master, in his heavenly kingdom.

It is cheering to think that the reign of priestcraft, and religious tyranny, is drawing to its close. The days are past, and will not return, when priests set their feet on the necks of kings and emperors, and claimed the disposal of crowns and sceptres. Nor will civil magistrates longer submit to act the degrading

part of bum-bailiffs and executioners for antichristian churches and lordly priests. Priestcraft is rapidly losing its hold of the mass of the people, and as education becomes general, the scriptures be universally diffused, and men every where excited to read, think, examine, judge for themselves, use their own reason and honestly follow the dictates of their own consciences in religion, its influence must be destroyed, and priests lose their power, until they shall only be found in the page of history, and there be spoken of as they deserve, as the enemies of truth and liberty of pure and genuine christianity, of the improvement of the world, the regeneration of mankind, of the spread of righteousness, peace and happiness. Let mankind awake from their long sleep of ignorance, break off the fetters of superstition, rouse all their dormant powers to action, fearlessly use their reason upon every subject, think and act for themselves in all religious matters, and the reign of priestcraft must end, and pure and primitive christianity spread and become universal.

I am under no apprehension, that the observations I have made on priestcraft, with a view to guard those who shall read them against its artifices, and to preserve them from its galling yoke, and in particular to help them to distinguish real christian ministers from priests, can lead any one to despise, or lightly esteem the true and faithful ministers of the gospel. It is hoped, reader, you will distinguish between priests, and those religious teachers whose great object is to enlighten and improve mankind; than whom no two classes of men can be more opposite. The latter are to be esteemed very highly for their work sake, and while they show, by their conduct, that they are influenced by no selfish motives, but by a regard of truth and by love to the human race, and that their object is to do all the good they can, they ought to be supported in their plans and labors. The former ought to be regarded as disguised enemies of religion, and as such to be discountenanced. May God deliver christianity from the hands of those who corrupt and pervert it. Jesus Christ was crucified through the malice of priests, and his faithful followers have been persecuted and destroyed by them. Happy should I be if I could say of the operations and influence of priestcraft, FINIS.

R. WRIGHT.

The peculiarity in the language of the Prophets and Messengers of God, to speak in the Person of God, applied to the Passages supposed to teach the Omnipresence of Christ.

(CONCLUDED FROM PAGE 233.)

To the Editors of the Christian Reflector.

GENTLEMEN,

Bishop Clayton, arguing on the above principle of scriptural interpretation, has the following remarks, which, as they come from a Trinitarian Bishop, may be more entitled to the serious consideration of Trinitarians.

"When Hagar," says the Bishop, "fled from the face of her mistress, it is said that an angel of Jehovah found her in the wilderness, and the angel of Jehovah said unto her, return to thy mistress." Now though Moses in this place calls the person who spake to Hagar an angel of Jehovah, yet Moses afterwards mentions this same person under the direct name of Jehovah: "For says he," (Gen. xvi. 7—13.) "Hagar called the name of Jehovah that spake to her, Thou God seest me."

"Thus also it is said of Abraham, (Gen. xviii. 1, &c.) that Jehovah appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre; and he sat at the tent door in the heat of the day; and he lift up his eyes and looked, and lo, three men stood by him." Now that two of the persons which are here called men, because they appeared as such, had each of them the appellation of Jehovah given them, will appear from the context. For when one of these men inquired for Sarah, and said, "Lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son;" upon which Sarah laughed within herself; then it is positively said, that Jehovah said unto Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh?" "Is any thing too hard for Jehovah?" And yet it is said, after all this, that the men rose up from thence, and looked towards Sodom; and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way: And Jehovah said, shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" And when two of the men had turned their faces from thence, and went towards Sodom; it is said, Abraham stood yet before Jehovah. And when Abraham was pleading in favor of Sodom and Gomorrah, he said, among other things, to this Jehovah with whom he was conversing, "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" And when the discourse was ended, Moses says, that "Jehovah went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place." Whence it is manifest beyond all doubt, that one of these three men who was left alone in conversation with Abraham, is called "Jehovah, and the judge of all the earth."

"And when the two men, who had left Abraham and Jehovah

conversing together, came to Sodom, it is said, (Gen. xix. 1, &c.) "And there came two angels to Sodom at even. And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened to Lot. And he said," that is, one of the angels said, "Escape for thy life; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither. And the sun was risen upon the earth, when Lot entered Zoar. Then Jehovah rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from Jehovah out of heaven." Whence it is plain, that one of these two angels is also dignified with the appellation of Jehovah, and yet is represented as acting under the influence of another Jehovah in heaven. So that it is manifest, here are two distinct persons, or angels, who appeared upon earth, to whom is given the appellation of Jehovah.

"Again, when Jacob lived with his father Laban, and was giving an account to his wives of their father's conduct and behavior towards him, he says, (Gen. xxiv. 47. xxxi. 11, 13.) And the angel of God spake to me in a dream, saying, Jacob; and I said, here am I; and he said, I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and vowedst a vow unto me." Now the vow which Jacob made at Bethel was this: (Gen. xxviii. 20, 21.) "If God be with me, and will keep me in the way, that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on; so that I come again to my father's house in peace: then shall Jehovah be my God." Whence it is plain, that an angel of God, speaking to Jacob, calls himself Jehovah the God of Bethel. "See also Gen. xxxii. 24, &c. and compare it with Hosea xii. 4, 5."

"And indeed," (continues the bishop,) nothing is more common than for prophets and angels to speak authoritatively in their own name, without introducing their speech with an explanatory preface, mentioning the person in whose name they speak. Thus the prophet Isaiah saith, (Isa. ii. 1.) "The word that Isaiah the son of Amos saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem—(Isa. iii. 1, 4.) For behold the Lord, the Jehovah of Hosts, doth take away from Jerusalem and from Judah the stay and the staff," &c. And then some verses afterwards, he saith, "And I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them, &c." Where it is manifest, that the prophet speaks in this last place in the first person, in his own name, without inserting the words, "and Jehovah said unto me," which seem necessary to have been inserted in order to make his words intelligible, if he intended they should be understood of Jehovah, and not of himself; but that he knew very well the Jews would of themselves supply the deficiency.

"In like manner, in the revelation of John, though the apostle declares, that it was delivered to him by an angel, and calls it (Rev. i. 1.) "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which

God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:" Yet through the whole Book this angel speaks indifferently in the first person, either when he speaks in the name of God the Father, or in the name of Jesus Christ, or in his own name. Thus, Rev. i. 10. St. John says, I was in the spirit on the Lord's-day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, &c." Now the voice was undoubtedly the voice of the angel, who was sent to testify unto him; and yet he speaks in the first person, saying, "I am Alpha and Omega."

"Towards the close of the whole Revelation, St. John says, (Rev. xxii. 8.) "I John saw these things and heard them, and when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, see thou do it not; for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this Book; worship God. And he saith unto me, seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book; for the time is at hand. And behold I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his works shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and the morning star."

"Where it is manifest, that this angel, who had refused worship and adoration, and had declared himself to be a created being, the fellow servant of John, and of his brethren the prophets; yet because he was sent by Jesus to testify that Revelation (Rev. i. 1.) which was given unto Jesus by God, he therefore speaks indifferently in the first person, *I*, either when he speaks in his own person, in the person of Jesus, or in the person of God the Father. See "Essay on Spirit," prefixed to "A Vindication of the Histories of the Old and New Testaments;" by Bishop Clayton, pp. 55, 65.

There can be no doubt, I think, from the foregoing, as to the correctness of the principle here laid down; that nothing is more common than for the prophets to speak authoritatively in the person of God; using the singular pronoun, *I*, without any preface, as that "The Lord said unto me," "The word of the Lord came unto me, &c." "Esaïas saith, I am found of them that sought me not;" "Moses saith, I will provoke them to jealousy"—"I will be with thee." And thus our Saviour; "I am with you alway;" "I am in the midst of them;" "I will come to you;" "I will do it."

But should Trinitarians object to this, then they are reduced to the following dilemma. If the prophets did not speak in

the person of God, then they spoke in their own person; and, consequently, they were not the prophets of God; they did not speak the words of God, but their own words; their testimony is of no weight; they are found to be false witnesses; for they testified that God spoke by them unto the people, when, in this case, he did not speak by them. And as they foretold future events, and performed miracles, they were all of them Gods, in the strict and absolute sense of the term; for nothing short of Deity could be competent to such works; and then we have a multiplicity of Deities, and Polytheism is established by christians. Which alternative will Trinitarians choose? *

The reader will be enabled from the above, to account satisfactorily for the frequent, and apparently abrupt, change of person in the sacred scriptures. Such, for instance, as the following. "Lo, three men stood by him"—"And he said, I will certainly return unto thee,"—"And the Lord said unto Abraham"—"And the men rose up from thence, &c." (Gen. xviii. 2, 10, 13, 16.) This is all one scene and communication, though the person is repeatedly changed, without the least intimation to this effect in the whole transaction. And thus again, in the next chapter: "There came two angels to Sodom at even"—"The Lord hath sent us"—"See I have accepted thee"—"Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither"—"Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven." (Gen. xix. 1, 13, 21, 22, 24.) The person is here changed in the same manner as in the preceding chapter. And in a multiplicity of instances through the whole scriptures; which must appear involved in perplexity and obscurity, without the application of the principle considered above. In order to understand them properly, we must bear in mind, that the prophets and messengers of God, speak and act in the person of God.

K.

* The writer of this article, lately advanced the argument which it contains at a public discussion on the Trinity; when he was charged by a Trinitarian advocate, mighty in the scriptures, with "sophistry, dishonesty, and deceitfulness, in handling the word of God!"

To the Editors of the Christian Reflector.

GENTLEMEN,

Your Birmingham correspondent (p. 252) who objects to the expression "lower orders" has advanced nothing but what is true respecting the equal participation of all ranks in natural advantages, the importance of the poor to society at large, the excellence to which they may and often do

attain as christians, and the levelling of all distinctions in the grave; but if he had considered more attentively the meaning of the epithet of which he complains he would have found his observations needless.

By *the lower orders* every one understands those who in rank and wealth are below the middle station, without any reference to their moral or intellectual condition and it conveys no more of insult or contempt than the phrase, adopted by your correspondent, *our poorer brethren*. Who ever thought of the expression *the higher orders* implying any thing of praise or respect, or being used any otherwise than conveniently to designate a certain portion of society? As long as the distinctions of rank and fortune exist, there must be terms expressive of them in common use: of this kind are the *higher* and *lower orders* and the *middle class*, any one of which is just as injurious as the others, but at none of which any reasonable man can be offended. I am I hope as ready to maintain the rights, and as anxious to promote the interests of my poorer brethren as any man. I feel as much indignation as any man when pride dares to despise them, or selfishness attempts to trample on them; but in defending their rights and shewing their importance, I must have some term by which to designate them, and I know of none more proper than *the lower orders*, because it obviously relates only to the external condition, and describes that only by a general comparison with the other principal portions of the social body. I have no doubt that when Unitarian ministers use the expression it is with this feeling, and I can no more perceive any thing *invidious* in its sense than *coarse*, *harsh*, or *vulgar* in its sound.

An all-wise Providence has appointed great differences in the external circumstances and advantages of his creatures, but we have all a common interest, and they are the true friends of improvement who endeavor to unite the honest and liberal minded of all classes, instead of taking occasions from trifles to enflame them against each other, and making the accidental distinctions of wealth and station a bar to the interests of christian fellowship, or to united efforts in the cause of truth and liberty.

How often do we find that the uneasy feelings which exist both between individuals and bodies of men, arise merely from their misapprehension of each other's meaning and would be removed by mutual explanation! In the present instance, your correspondent need only have inquired a little more particularly into the meaning of the epithet which hurt his feelings, and he would have found that he had connected a wrong idea with it.

I am confident I agree with him, as I hope that most of our Unitarian ministers do also, in detestation of all attempts to oppress or insult *the lower orders*; regarding them as brethren, and in all important particulars as equals, and in an anxious wish to improve their condition, but certainly I should never have thought of scrupling to use this expression in speaking of them, and I believe neither your correspondent nor any one else will give me credit for humility in assigning to myself only a *middling* moral and intellectual rank because

I subscribe myself,

ONE OF THE MIDDLE CLASS.

Religious Intelligence.

THE following communication was received by the person to whom it is addressed, only in time for the number for October. Owing to a variety of circumstances, it was not inserted at that period, and as no other account of the Scottish Association has yet appeared, we hope our readers will still consider it "a word in season."—EDITORS.

To the Rev. George Harris,

MY DEAR SIR,

I am sure it will be gratifying to all friends to the cause of Unitarianism, and to yourself in particular, to know that it is once again beginning to evince symptoms of returning life and vigor in this city; and under this conviction, I offer no apology for requesting an insertion in the Christian Reflector of the following brief account of the proceedings at our annual association of Scottish Unitarians held on the first of August.

The Rev. W. J. Fox of London kindly officiated on the preceding Sunday, and preached three times. To those who have had the happiness of hearing this singularly gifted man, it

would suffice to observe that he acquitted himself in his usual surpassing manner; but, to others, I fear no words will convey an adequate idea of it. The clearness and originality of his views, the acuteness and force of his arguments, and the overpowering brilliancy of his eloquence in overturning and razing even to the foundation the strong holds of reputed orthodoxy, seemed equally to *astonish* (although perchance not equally to *delight*) both friends and opponents:

Sunday the 1st August being the day of the association, a phenomenon was presented to the view of the citizens of Glasgow, the heretical chapel in Union Place was crowded. Mr. Fox preached in the morning from Acts xviii. 4. "And Paul reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath." Could those who delight so much in vilifying this brightest ornament of human nature, reason, have heard this discourse, they must have gone away disposed to think and speak more respectfully and justly of it in future. It was indeed throughout a splendid burst of eloquence. The Rev. B. Mardon conducted the service in the afternoon, and the Rev. W. J. Fox preached again in the evening. The congregations were numerous and deeply attentive. At the close of the morning's service, the reports were given from the different Unitarian stations which were upon the whole encouraging. I think it unnecessary to mention the amount of the collection, lest some of the Bolton worthies should smile at *our* "day of small things." I will only add it was more than double on any former occasion.

On Monday the brethren assembled at dinner to the number of upwards of forty persons, T. Muir, Esq. of Muir Park, in the chair. The evening passed away in the most harmonious and agreeable manner, and must have been gratifying in the extreme to all who had the important cause it was intended to promote sincerely at heart. Mr. Fox addressed us in three long and splendid speeches, representing in the most forcible and glowing colors, the infinite superiority of the pure, intelligible, benignant, encouraging doctrines of Unitarianism over the gloomy mysterious and heart-chilling principles which Calvinists profess; and urged us by every consideration to persevere in a steady course of unanimity and zeal. We were also much indebted to our worthy pastor who displayed much talent and ingenuity in a speech on the occasion; likewise to Mr. Corn of Birmingham, who fortunately happened to be passing through the city. In two excellent speeches he gratified us with intelligence of the cheering aspect of the good cause in the south, and urged us to "go and do likewise."

Time will not permit me to notice the many other eloquent speeches with which we were favored. Many appropriate toasts were given, and allow me to conclude that none was

drunk with more right good will and enthusiasm, than the health of the Rev. George Harris, introduced with an elegant eulogium by Mr. Fox.

C. B. B.

Glasgow.

The Rev. M. Maurice of Frenchay near Bristol, who has been the pastor of that society upwards of ten years, and has been particularly active in the promotion of every good work in that neighborhood, and is in consequence highly and generally respected, has, to the great regret of his congregation, resigned his office amongst them, in consequence of ill health; and the Rev. Henry Clarke, Unitarian Missionary, with whom many of our readers are well acquainted, has been unanimously chosen his successor, and has already entered upon its important duties. Our best wishes are for Mr. Clarke's usefulness and happiness, but we cannot help regretting that so wide a field as Lancashire presents for his labours as a permanent missionary, the missionary society did not confer a lasting benefit on the county, by engaging him in its service.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

✂ *Our next Volume will be printed on a New Type, and will commence with No. I. of a NEW SERIES, the price will continue the same.*

Many favors are omitted for want of room.

We are promised for our next volume a series of papers on the following subject; "Christianity not inconsistent with the love of Liberty and the assertion of Political Rights;" by the author of the papers on the "Christian Ministry Defended and Priestcraft Exploded."

We are also promised from another friend a Review of Dr. Channing's Sermon, lately published at Boston, United States, North America, at the ordination of his colleague, the Rev. E. S. Gannett; this will be inserted in our next Number.

We are obliged to Mr. S. of Birmingham, for his communication, which if he would abridge, it would suit our pages much better; at present we cannot promise sufficient room for it in its present form; and we have some hesitation as to the propriety of publishing the Letter appended without the author's knowledge or consent.

END OF VOLUME THE FIFTH.

F. B. WRIGHT, PRINTER, LIVERPOOL.

GTU Library



3 2400 00269 8169



**Graduate Theological Union
Library**

**2400 Ridge Road
Berkeley, CA 94709**

DEMCO

